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Introduction to Ansible and Ansible Tower

Ansible, an open source community project sponsored by Red Hat, is a **simple automation language** that can perfectly describe an IT application infrastructure in the form of an Ansible Playbook. Ansible is also an **automation engine** that runs Ansible Playbooks.

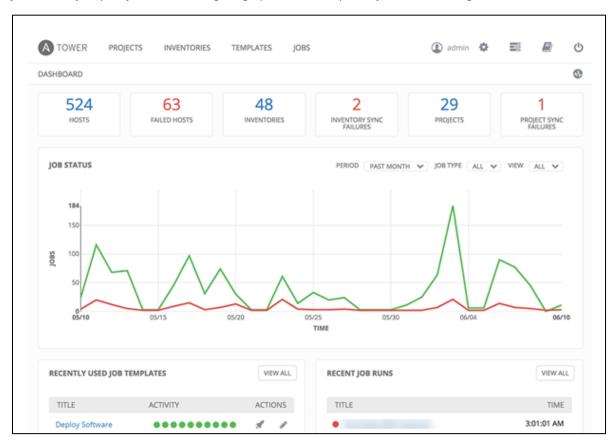
Ansible Tower by **Red Hat** is a commercial offering that helps teams control, secure and manage their Ansible automation. Tower builds on the underlying Ansible automation engine by adding a visual dashboard, role-based access control (RBAC), job scheduling and graphical inventory management.

Using Ansible Tower, all Ansible automations are **centrally logged**, ensuring **complete auditability and compliance**, across the organization.

Ansible Tower Dashboard

The Tower dashboard provides a heads-up NOC-style display for everything going on in your Ansible environment.

As soon as you log in, you'll see your host and inventory status, all the recent job activity and a snapshot of recent job runs. Adjust your job status settings to graph data from specific job and time ranges.

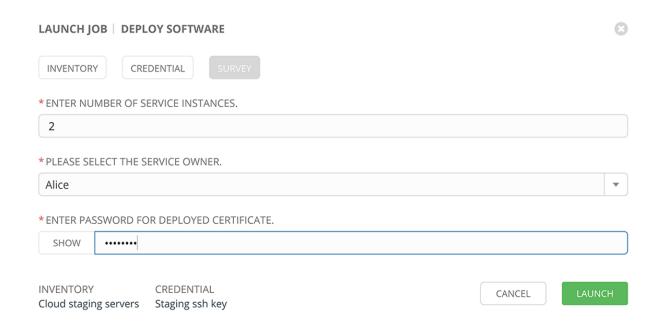


Enable Self-Service IT

Tower lets you launch Playbooks with just a single click. **Role-based access control** (RBAC) keeps environments secure, and teams efficient. Non-privileged users can **safely deploy** entire applications with **push-button deployment** access.

Tower's simplified portal mode and survey features allow IT administrators to delegate automation job runs to users across the organization - synchronized directly from corporate directories such as LDAP, Active Directory or delegated SAML authentication.

With Tower RBAC, developers or QA departments can provision their own development and test environments. Customer service agents can provision a new demo environment. Or junior admins can run simple jobs - like changing passwords - all at the press of a button.



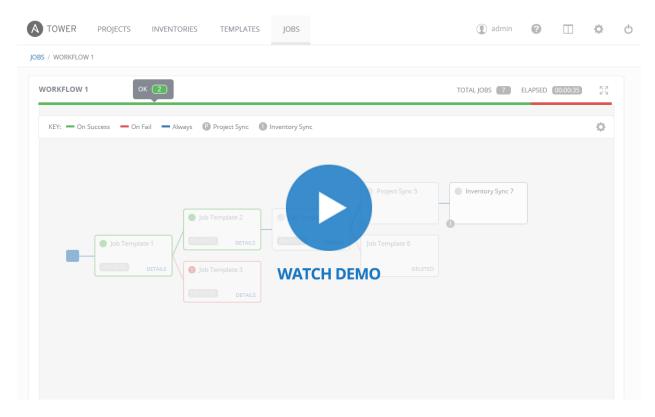
Job Scheduling and Multi-Playbook Workflows

Playbook runs, cloud inventory updates, and source control updates can be scheduled inside Tower - run now, run later, or run forever.

Set up occasional tasks like nightly backups, periodic configuration remediation for compliance, or a full continuous delivery pipeline with just a few clicks.

Tower's multi-Playbook workflows chain any number of Playbooks, regardless of whether they use different inventories, run as different users, run at once or utilize different credentials.

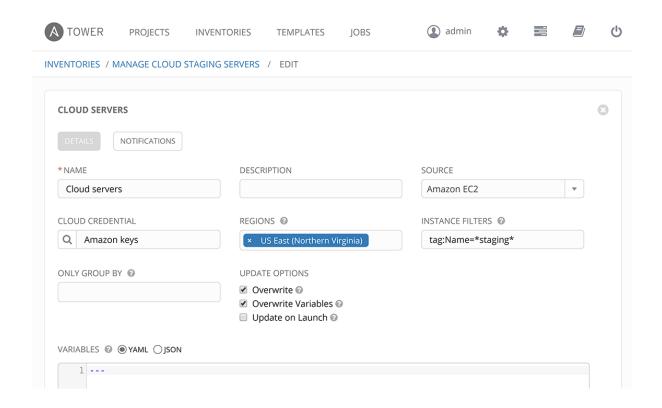
Tower workflows allow for many complex operations. You can build a provisioning workflow that provisions machines, applies a base system configuration, and deploys an application, all with different Playbooks maintained by different teams. You can build a CI/CD testing workflow that builds an application, deploys it to a test environment, runs tests, and automatically promotes the application based on test results. Set up different Playbooks to run in case of success or failure of a prior workflow Playbook. Easily model complex processes with Tower's intuitive workflow editor.



Manage and Track Your Entire Inventory

Tower helps you manage your entire infrastructure. Easily pull your inventory from public cloud providers such as Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and more. Synchronize from your local OpenStack cloud or VMware environment. Connect your inventory directly to your Red Hat Satellite or Red Hat CloudForms environment. Or connect Tower directly to your custom CMDB.

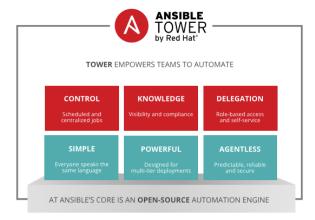
Tower can keep your cloud inventory in sync, and Tower's powerful provisioning callbacks allow nodes to request configuration on demand, enabling auto scaling.



Integrate Tower Using the REST API and CLI Tool

Every feature of Tower is available via Tower's REST API, providing the ideal API for a systems management infrastructure to build against. Call Tower jobs from your existing build tools, show Tower information in your custom dashboards and more. Get API usage information and best practices with built-in documentation.

If it's easier for you to wrap a command line interface than write REST code, Tower's CLI tool is available for launching jobs from CI systems such as Jenkins, or when you need to integrate with other command line tools.



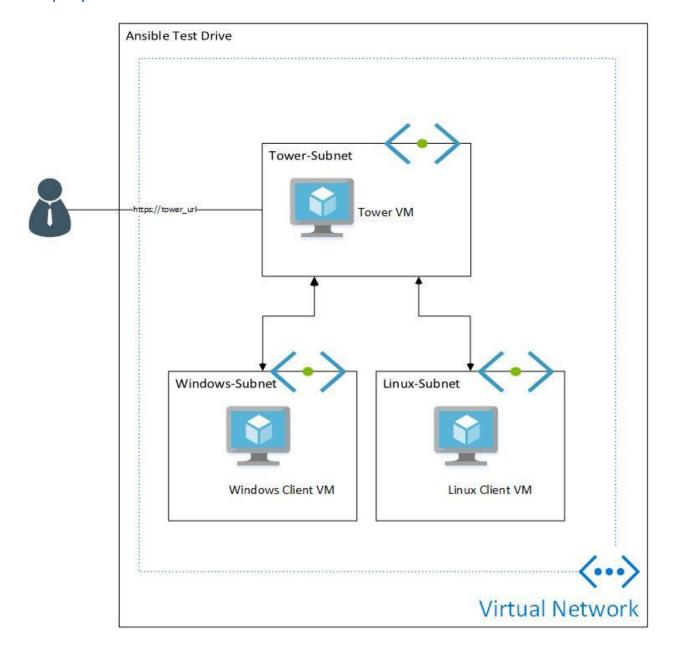
About the test drive

This test drive will help you experience the capabilities of Ansible Tower. As described in previous sections, Ansible Tower builds upon the Ansible Engine. To get the most out of this test drive, the user should be familiar with Ansible and how Ansible Playbooks work. Most users find Ansible incredibly easy to learn and are writing playbooks the same day.

The Ansible website hosts many resources for those wishing to learn more about Ansible (https://www.ansible.com/get-started).

Ansible Tower comes with a feature rich Dashboard to provide users with a nice interface to work with server management. We will be using Ansible Tower to deploy and manage web servers in Windows and Linux environments. Are you ready to take the Driver seat and experience the Red Hat Ansible Tower test drive?

Deployment Architecture



Getting Started

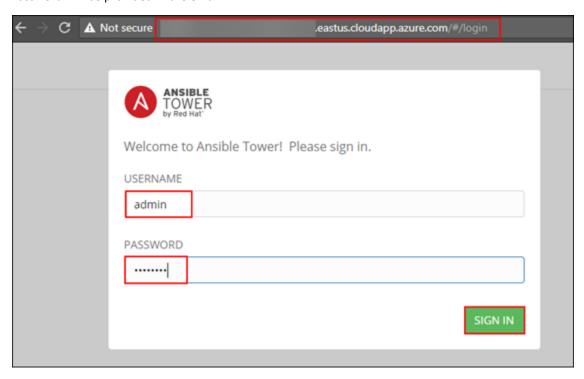
Once you have signed up/in, you will see the test drive launch screen. Once the test drive is deployed, you will receive the access information via email and also provided in the access information.

Lab 1: Getting Started with Ansible Tower

Access Ansible tower

During this lab, we are going to log in to Tower using the Ansible Tower DNS Name and other login details received via email or provided in the access information, browse to the Tower interface at: http://<TowerDNSName>

Log in using the Tower username and password details as provided. The default username set during installation is 'admin'. Password will be provided in the email.



Once we sign in, we will be directed to the Tower Dashboard page.

Tower Dashboard

The Tower Dashboard offers a friendly graphical framework for your IT orchestration needs. Across the top-left side of the Tower Dashboard, users can quickly navigate to their **Projects**, **Inventories**, **Job Templates**, and **Jobs**.

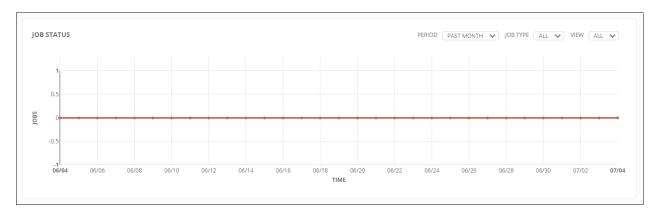
Across the top-right side of this interface, administrators can access the tools they need to configure organizations, users, groups, and permissions as well as view related documentation, access portal mode, and log out.



At the top of the Dashboard is a summary of your hosts, inventories, and projects. Each of these is linked to the corresponding object in Tower, for easy access.



On the main Tower Dashboard screen, a summary appears listing your current **Job Status**. Also, available for review are summaries of **Recently Used Job Templates** and **Recently Run Jobs**.



Add Credentials

To enter the Settings Menu screen for Ansible Tower, click the button. This screen allows you to create your organizations, add credentials, add users and teams, schedule management jobs, modify your Tower's configuration, and more. You can also view your license from the Settings Menu's 'View Your License' link.



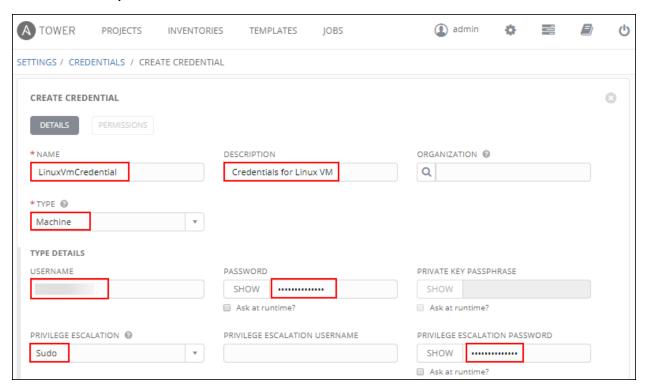
Credentials are utilized by Tower for authentication when launching Jobs against machines, synchronizing with inventory sources, and importing project content from a version control system.

Tower credentials are imported and stored encrypted in Tower, and are not retrievable in plain text on the command line by any user. Once a password or key has been entered into the Tower interface, it is encrypted and inserted into the Tower database, and cannot be retrieved from Tower. We can grant users and teams the ability to use these credentials, without exposing the credential to the user. If we have a user move to a different team or leave the organization, you don't have to re-key all our systems just because that credential was available in Tower.

Now, we will navigate to Credentials, by clicking on the Setting () button on the top right of the dashboard menu.

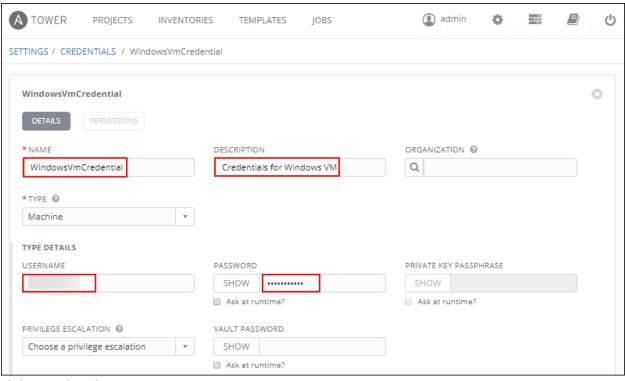
We will add new credentials in Ansible Tower for the Linux Virtual Machine as well as Windows Virtual Machine:

- 1. Click the button located in the upper right corner of the **Credentials** screen.
- 2. Enter the following details:
 - Name: LinuxVmCredential
 - Description: Credentials for Linux VM
 - Organization: default
 - Type: Machine
 - Type details:
 - a. Username: (Enter the vmUsername for VM received via email)
 - b. Password: (Enter the vmPassword for VM received via email)
 - c. Privilege escalation: SUDO
 - d. Privilege escalation Password: (Provide the vmPassword for VM you received via email)



- 3. Click Save when done.
- 4. Again, click the button located in the upper right corner of the **Credentials** screen.
- 5. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Name: WindowsVmCredential
 - Description: Credentials for Windows VM
 - Organization: default
 - Type: Machine
 - Type details:

- a. Username: (Enter the vmUsername for VM received via email)
- b. Password: (Enter the vmPassword for VM received via email)



6. Click Save when done.

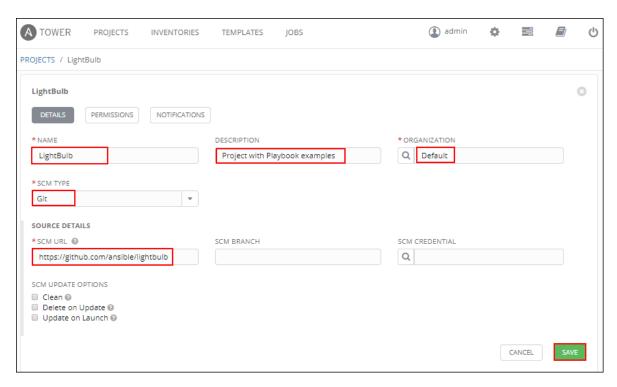
Add Projects

A Project is a logical collection of Ansible playbooks, represented in Tower.

We can manage playbooks and playbook directories by either placing them manually under the Project Base Path on your Tower server, or by placing your playbooks into a source code management (SCM) system supported by Tower, including Git, Subversion, and Mercurial.

Now you will create a new project for Linux Machines by clicking on PROJECTS on top of the dashboard menu:

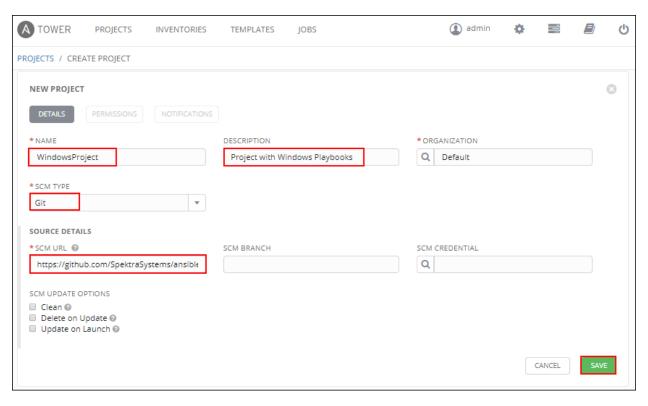
- 1. Then, click the button, which launches the **Create Project** dialog.
- 2. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Name: LightBulb
 - Description: Project with Playbook examples
 - Organization: default
 - SCM Type: Git
 - Source details:
 - a. SCM URL: https://github.com/ansible/lightbulb



Click Save when done.

Now you will create another new project for Windows Machines by clicking on PROJECTS on top of the dashboard menu:

- 4. Again, click the button, which launches the **Create Project** dialog.
- 5. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Name: WindowsProject
 - Description: Project with Windows Playbooks
 - Organization: default
 - SCM Type: Git
 - Source details:
 - a. SCM URL: https://github.com/SpektraSystems/ansible-testdrive



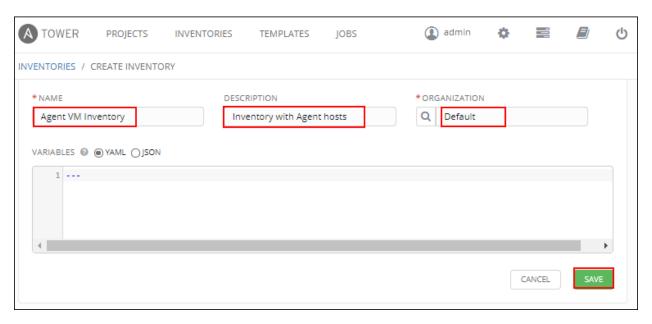
6. Click Save when done.

Add Inventory and Test Connectivity

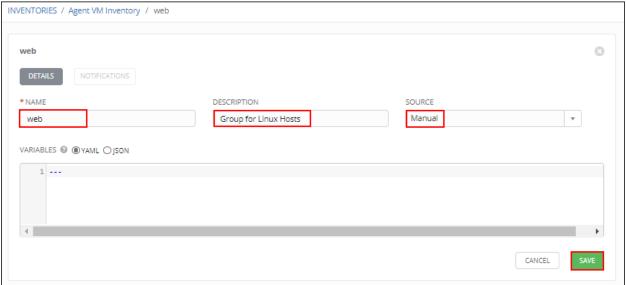
An Inventory is a collection of hosts against which jobs may be launched, the same as an Ansible inventory file. Inventories are divided into groups and these groups contain the actual hosts. Groups may be sourced manually, by entering host names into Tower, or from one of Ansible Tower's supported cloud providers.

Now, you will create a new Inventory and add Linux and Windows Machines as hosts by first clicking on INVENTORIES on top of the dashboard menu:

- 1. Then, click the button, which launches the **Create Inventory** dialog.
- 2. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Name: Agent VM Inventory
 - Description: Inventory with Agent hosts
 - Organization: Default

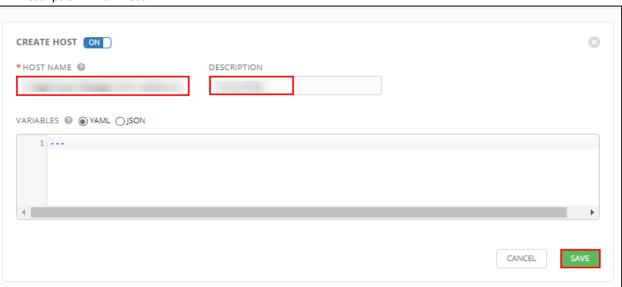


- 3. Click on Save when done.
- button in GROUPS, which launches the **Create Group** dialog. 4. Now, click the
- 5. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Name: web
 - **Description: Group for Linux Hosts**
 - Source: Manual



- 6. Click on **Save** when done.
- Now, click on the created group web
- button in HOSTS, which launches the **Create Host** dialog. Then, click the
- Enter the given details into the following fields:

- Host Name: (Enter the DNS Name for Linux VM received via email)
- Description: Linux Host



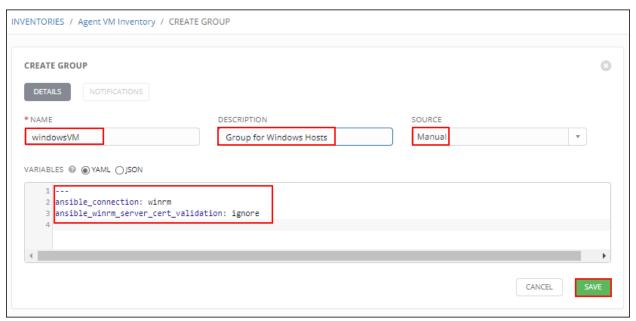
- 10. Click on Save when done.
- 11. Now go back to Agent VM Inventory page by clicking on Agent VM Inventory



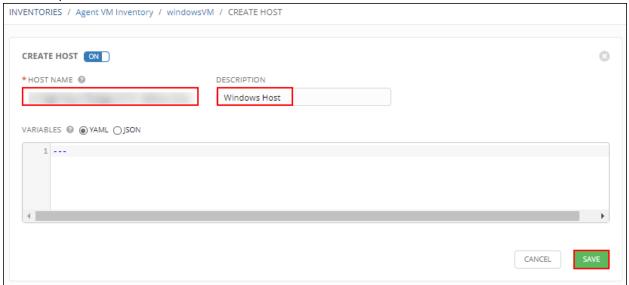
- 12. Now, click the button in GROUPS, which launches the **Create Group** dialog.
- 13. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Name: windowsVM
 - Description: Group for Windows Hosts
 - Source: Manual
 - Variables: Add the following lines below ---

ansible_connection: winrm

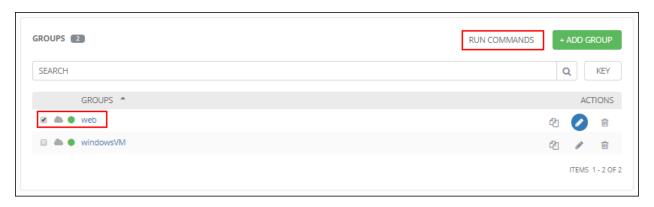
ansible_winrm_server_cert_validation: ignore



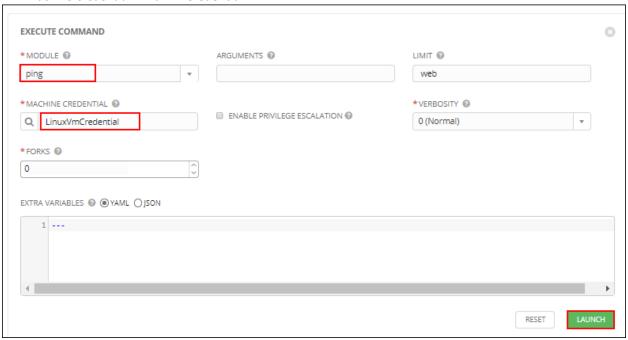
- 14. Click on Save when done.
- 15. Now, click on the created group windowsVM
- button in HOSTS, which launches the **Create Host** dialog. 16. Then, click the
- 17. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Host Name: (Enter the DNS Name for Windows VM received via email)
 - **Description: Windows Host**



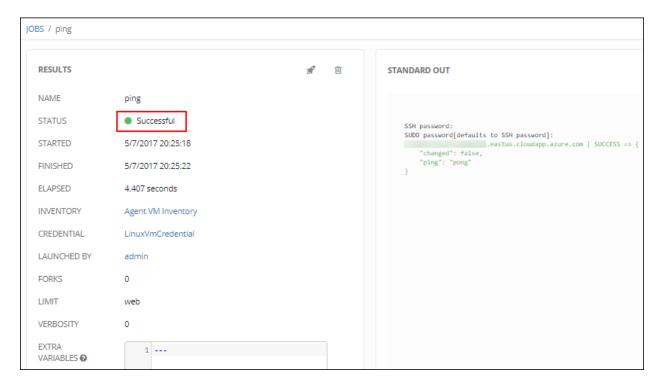
- 18. Click on **Save** when done. Now we will test the connectivity to the added hosts.
- 19. Now go back to Agent VM Inventory page by clicking on Agent VM Inventory
- 20. Select web group and click on Run Commands, which launches the Execute Command dialog



- 21. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Module: ping
 - Machine Credential: LinuxVmCredential



22. Click on **Launch** when done, which launches the Job Results page.

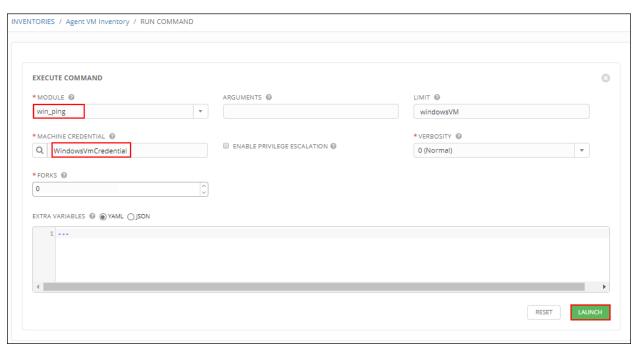


We can see status of the Job in that page, and if that job was successful, status will be **Successful** with a green icon next to it.

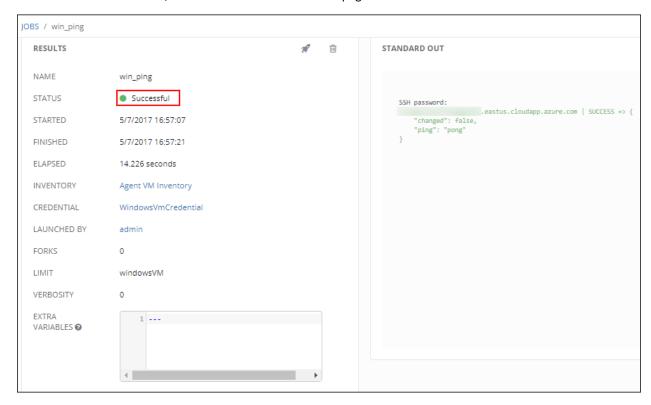
- 23. Now go back to Agent VM Inventory page by clicking on INVENTORIES from the top menu and then click on Agent VM Inventory.
- 24. Select windowsVM group and click on Run Commands, which launches the Execute Command dialog



- 25. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - Module: Select win_ping
 - Machine Credential: WindowsVmCredential



26. Click on **Launch** when done, which launches the Job Results page.



We can see status of the Job in that page, and if that job was successful, status will be **Successful** with a green icon next to it.

END OF LAB

Lab 2: Deploy Web Servers on Linux VM using Ansible Playbook

Deploy Nginx Web Server

A job template is a definition and set of parameters for running an Ansible job. Job templates are useful to execute the same job many times. Job templates also encourage the reuse of Ansible playbook content and collaboration between teams. While the REST API allows for the execution of jobs directly, Tower requires that you first create a job template.

We can access Job Template page by clicking on TEMPLATES on the menu on top of the dashboard.



This menu opens a list of the job templates that are currently available. The job template list may be sorted and searched by **Name** or **Description**. The **Templates** tab also enables the user to launch, schedule, modify, and remove a job template.

Now, you will create a new template for deploying Nginx Web Server by first clicking on TEMPLATES on top of the dashboard menu:

1. Then, click the button, then select Job Template from the menu list. **TEMPLATES** TEMPLATES Create a new template + ADD - Q SEARCH KEY Job Template NAME ^ TYPE \$ Demo Job Template Job Template ITEMS 1-1 OF 1

2. Enter the given details into the following fields:

• NAME: Install Nginx

JOB TYPE: Run

• INVENTORY: Agent VM Inventory

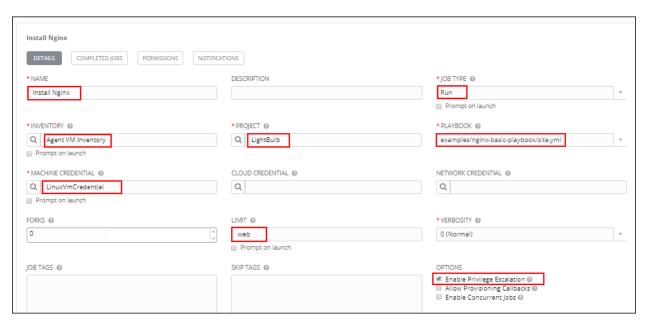
PROJECT: LightBulb

PLAYBOOK: examples/nginx-basic-playbook/site.yml

• MACHINE CREDENTIAL: LinuxVmCredential

LIMIT: web

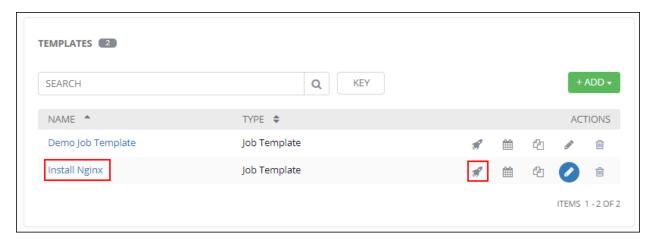
• Enable Privilege Escalation: Tick



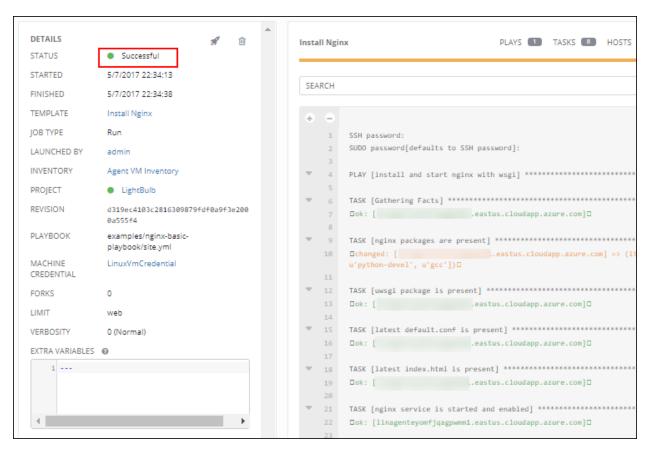
3. Click on Save when done.

Saving the template does not exit the job template page but remains on the Job Template Details view for further editing, if necessary. The **Details** tab of a saved job allows you to review, edit, and add a survey (if the job type is not a scan).

You can verify the template is saved when the newly created template appears on the list of templates at the bottom of the screen.



Now, we will launch a Job Template by clicking the launch icon. We will be directed to the Job Results Page. The Jobs page shows details of all the tasks and events for that playbook run.



We can see the status as successful for Job to deploy Nginx Web Server in Linux VM.

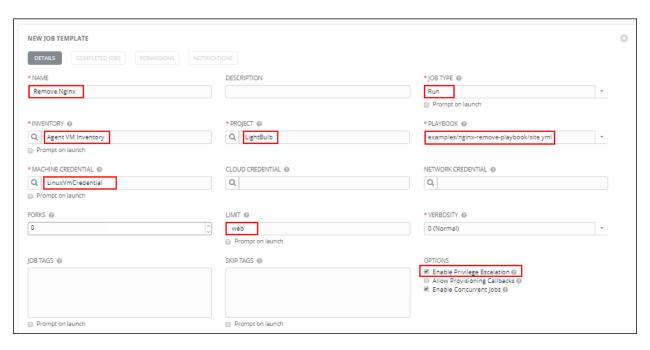
Now to verify that Nginx is installed on Linux Virtual Machine and is accessible through Public DNS Name, we will open a browser and navigate to the Linux VM DNS name and check if the Ansible Tower is coming on the page as shown below.



Remove Nginx Web Server

Now, you will create a new template for removing Nginx Web Server by first clicking on TEMPLATES on top of the dashboard menu:

- 1. Then, click the button, then select Job Template from the menu list.
- 2. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - NAME: Remove Nginx
 - JOB TYPE: Run
 - INVENTORY: Agent VM Inventory
 - PROJECT: LightBulb
 - PLAYBOOK: examples/nginx-remove-playbook/site.yml
 - MACHINE CREDENTIAL: LinuxVmCredential
 - LIMIT: web
 - Enable Privilege Escalation: Tick



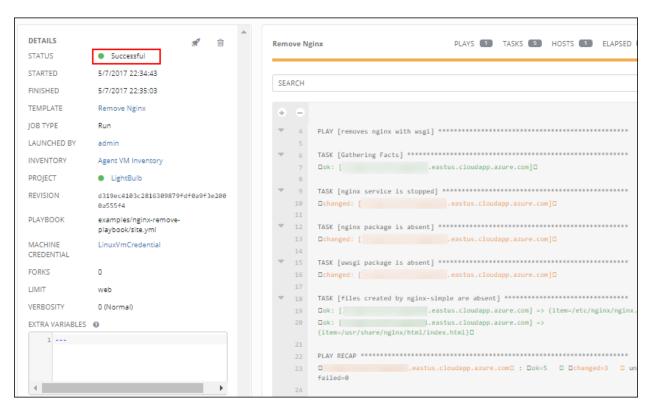
Click on Save when done.

Saving the template does not exit the job template page but remains on the Job Template Details view for further editing, if necessary. The **Details** tab of a saved job allows you to review, edit, and add a survey (if the job type is not a scan).

You can verify the template is saved when the newly created template appears on the list of templates at the bottom of the screen.



Now, we will launch a Job Template by clicking the launch icon. We will be directed to the Job Results Page. The Jobs page shows details of all the tasks and events for that playbook run.



We can see the status as successful for Job to deploy Nginx Web Server in Linux VM.

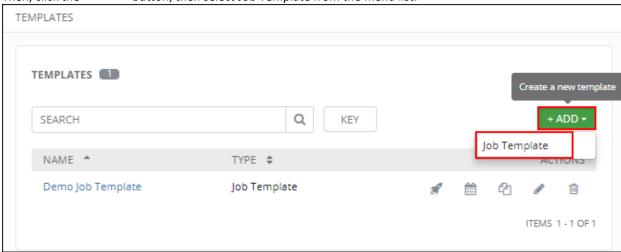
Now to verify that Nginx Webserver is removed from the Linux Virtual Machine and is not accessible through Public DNS Name, we will open a browser and navigate to the Linux VM DNS name and check if the page is unreachable



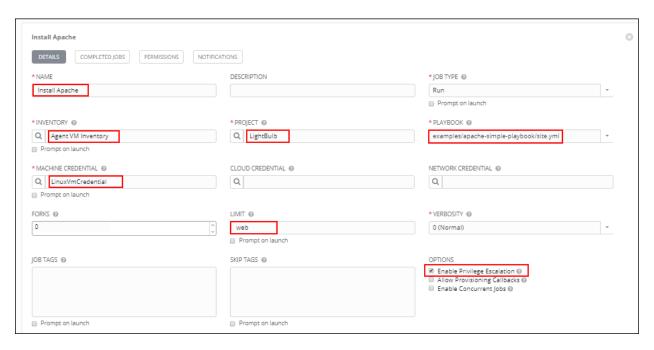
Deploy Apache Web Server

Now, you will create a new template for deploying Apache Web Server by first clicking on TEMPLATES on top of the dashboard menu:

1. Then, click the button, then select Job Template from the menu list.



- 2. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - NAME: Install Apache
 - JOB TYPE: Run
 - INVENTORY: Agent VM Inventory
 - PROJECT: LightBulb
 - PLAYBOOK: examples/apache-simple-playbook/site.yml
 - MACHINE CREDENTIAL: LinuxVmCredential
 - LIMIT: web
 - Enable Privilege Escalation: **Tick**



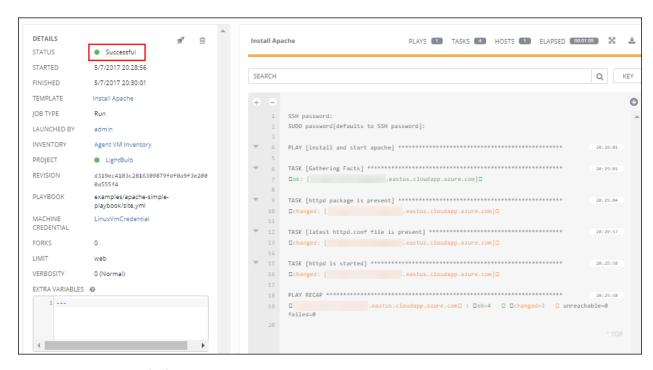
Click on Save when done.

Saving the template does not exit the job template page but remains on the Job Template Details view for further editing, if necessary. The **Details** tab of a saved job allows you to review, edit, and add a survey (if the job type is not a scan).

You can verify the template is saved when the newly created template appears on the list of templates at the bottom of the screen.



Now, we will launch a Job Template by clicking the launch icon. We will be directed to the Job Results Page. The Jobs page shows details of all the tasks and events for that playbook run.



We can see the status as successful for Job to deploy apache Web Server in Linux VM.

Now to verify that apache is installed on Linux Virtual Machine and is accessible through Public DNS Name, we will open a browser and navigate to the Linux VM DNS name and check if the Ansible Tower is coming on the page as shown below.



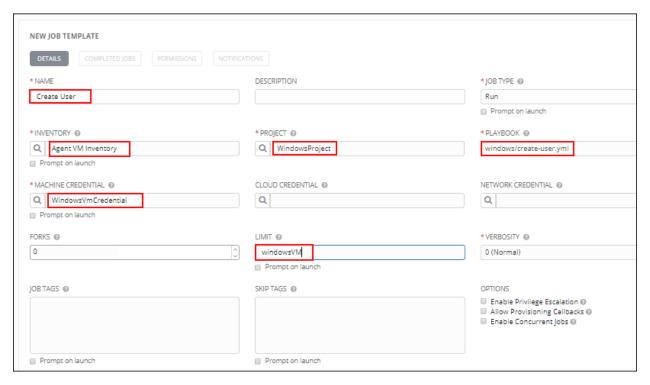
END OF LAB

Lab 3: Manage Windows VM using Ansible Playbook

Create a Local User Account in Windows VM

Now, you will create a new template for creating a local User account in Windows VM by first clicking on TEMPLATES on top of the dashboard menu:

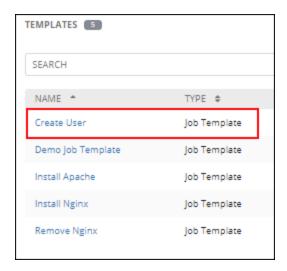
- 1. Then, click the button, then select Job Template from the menu list.
- 2. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - NAME: Create User
 - JOB TYPE: Run
 - INVENTORY: Agent VM Inventory
 - PROJECT: WindowsProject
 - PLAYBOOK: windows/create-user.yml
 - MACHINE CREDENTIAL: WindowsVmCredential
 - LIMIT: windowsVM



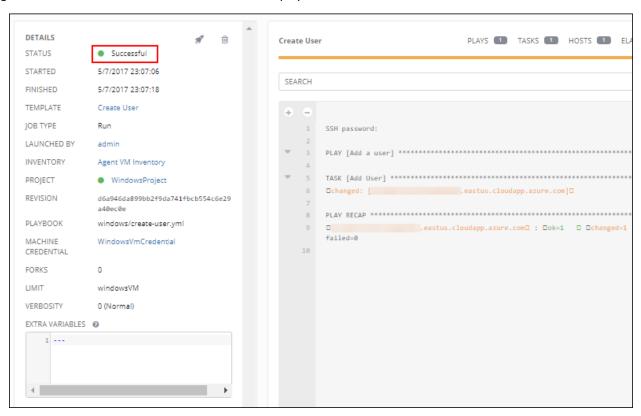
3. Click on Save when done.

The play create-user.yml has commands for creating a local user named 'ansible' with password "@ns1bl3"

You can verify the template is saved when the newly created template appears on the list of templates at the bottom of the screen.



Now, we will launch a Job Template by clicking the launch icon. We will be directed to the Job Results Page. The Jobs page shows details of all the tasks and events for that playbook run.

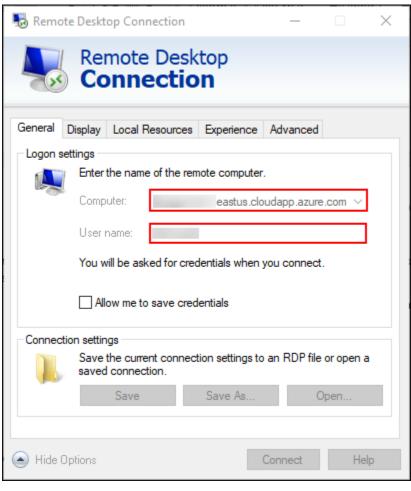


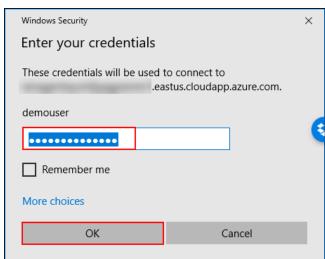
We can see the status as successful for Job to create a local user account in Windows VM.

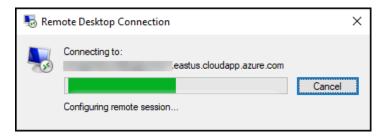
Now to verify that a user account with username 'ansible' is created on Windows Virtual Machine, we will access the Virtual Machine using a RDP client and check.

Using RDP Client, DNS Name of Windows VM, username and password of VM we received via email, log in to the Windows VM.

From Windows, using the built-in RDP Client, we can connect like given below:







Once we are logged in to the virtual machine, we should go to the User accounts inside Control Panel.

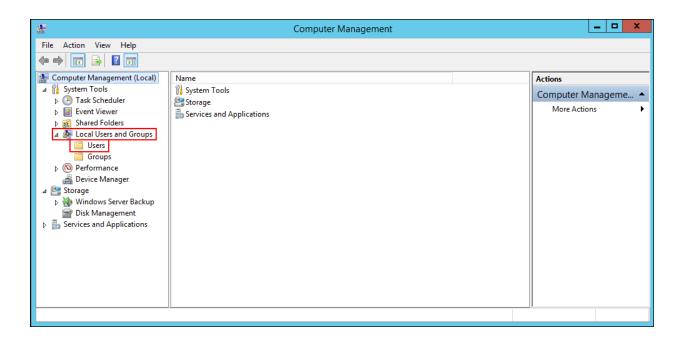
For that, we will Right Click on Windows button the bottom left of the windows vm.



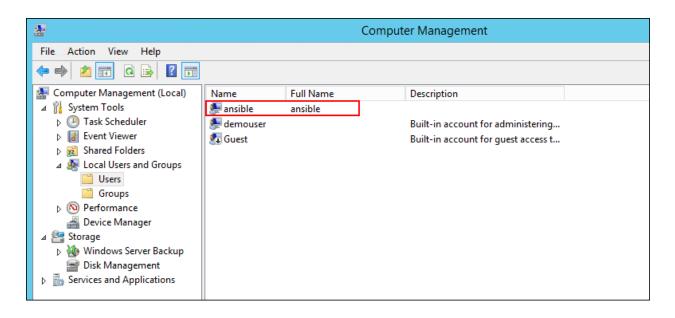
Then Select Computer Management from the options.



From the options listed, we should go to Local Users and Groups and select Users to view the User accounts present in the Virtual Machine.



In the Users page, we can see that the user ansible has been created.



Install a Package

Now, you will create a new template for installing Firefox Browser by first clicking on TEMPLATES on top of the dashboard menu:

1. Then, click the button, then select Job Template from the menu list.

2. Enter the given details into the following fields:

• NAME: Install Firefox browser

• JOB TYPE: Run

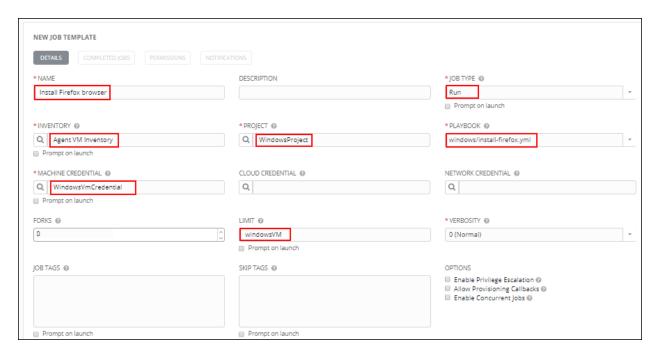
• INVENTORY: Agent VM Inventory

PROJECT: WindowsProject

• PLAYBOOK: windows/install-firefox.yml

• MACHINE CREDENTIAL: WindowsVmCredential

LIMIT: windowsVM

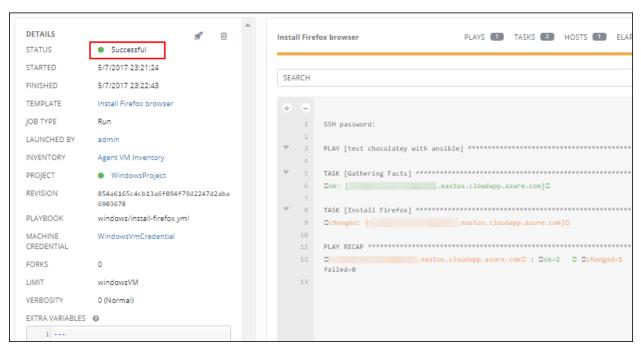


3. Click on Save when done.

You can verify the template is saved when the newly created template appears on the list of templates at the bottom of the screen.



Now, we will launch a Job Template by clicking the launch icon. We will be directed to the Job Results Page. The Jobs page shows details of all the tasks and events for that playbook run.

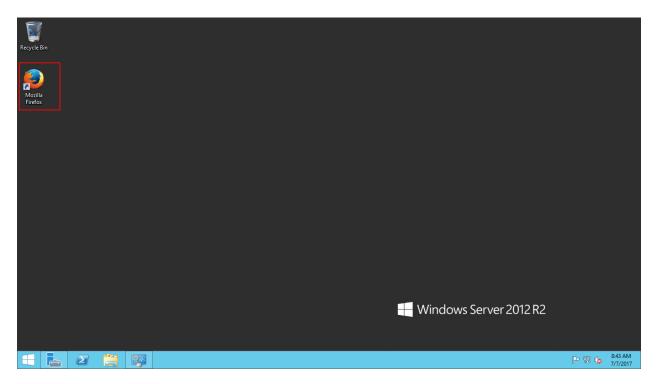


We can see the status as successful for Job to install Firefox Browser on the windows virtual machine.

Now to verify that Firefox is installed on the Windows Virtual Machine, we will access the Virtual Machine using a RDP client and check.

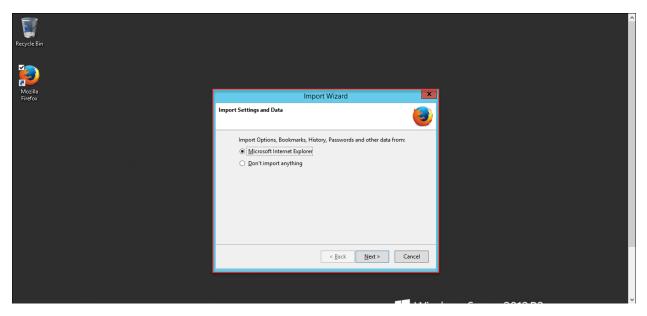
Using RDP Client, DNS Name of Windows VM, username and password of VM we received via email, we will log in to the Windows VM.

Once we are logged in to the virtual machine, we can see the Mozilla Firefox browser icon on the Desktop Home Screen.

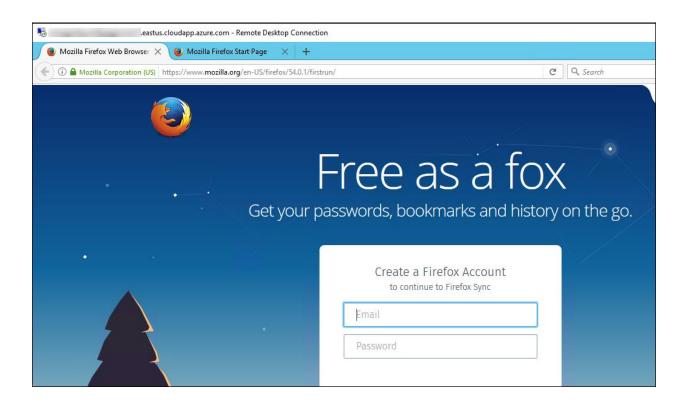


To verify that browser was properly installed, we will open the browser and check.

An Import Wizard will come up to import any existing bookmarks.



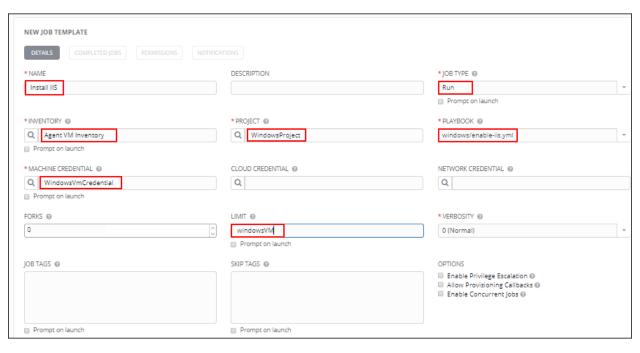
Once the initial configuration is done, the browser will be launched.



Deploy IIS Web Server

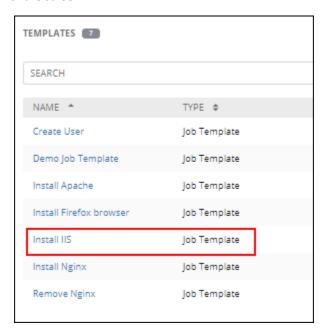
Now, we will create a new template for deploying IIS Web Server by first clicking on TEMPLATES on top of the dashboard menu:

- 1. Then, click the button, then select Job Template from the menu list.
- 2. Enter the given details into the following fields:
 - NAME: Install IISJOB TYPE: Run
 - INVENTORY: Agent VM Inventory
 - PROJECT: WindowsProject
 - PLAYBOOK: windows/enable -iis.yml
 - MACHINE CREDENTIAL: WindowsVmCredential
 - LIMIT: windowsVM

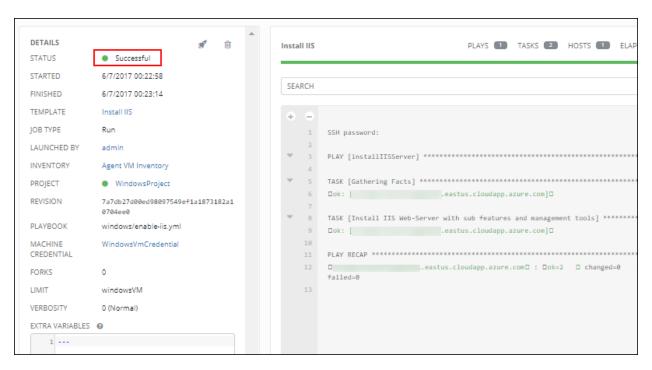


3. Click on Save when done.

You can verify the template is saved when the newly created template appears on the list of templates at the bottom of the screen.

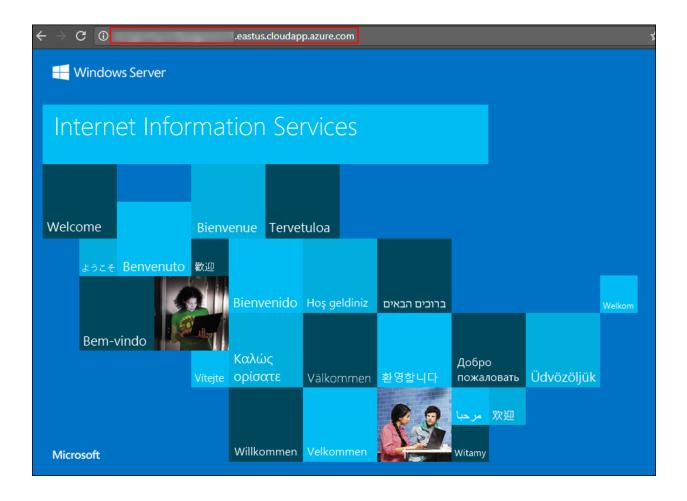


Now, we will launch a Job Template by clicking the launch icon. We will be directed to the Job Results Page. The Jobs page shows details of all the tasks and events for that playbook run.



We can see the status as successful for Job to deploy IIS Web Server in Windows VM.

Now to verify that IIS is installed on Windows Virtual Machine and is accessible through Public DNS Name, we will open a browser and navigate to the Windows VM DNS name and check if the IIS Server default page is coming up as shown below.



END OF LAB

Thank You for following the test drive.
