WORKING WITH AZURE AUTOMATION TASKS

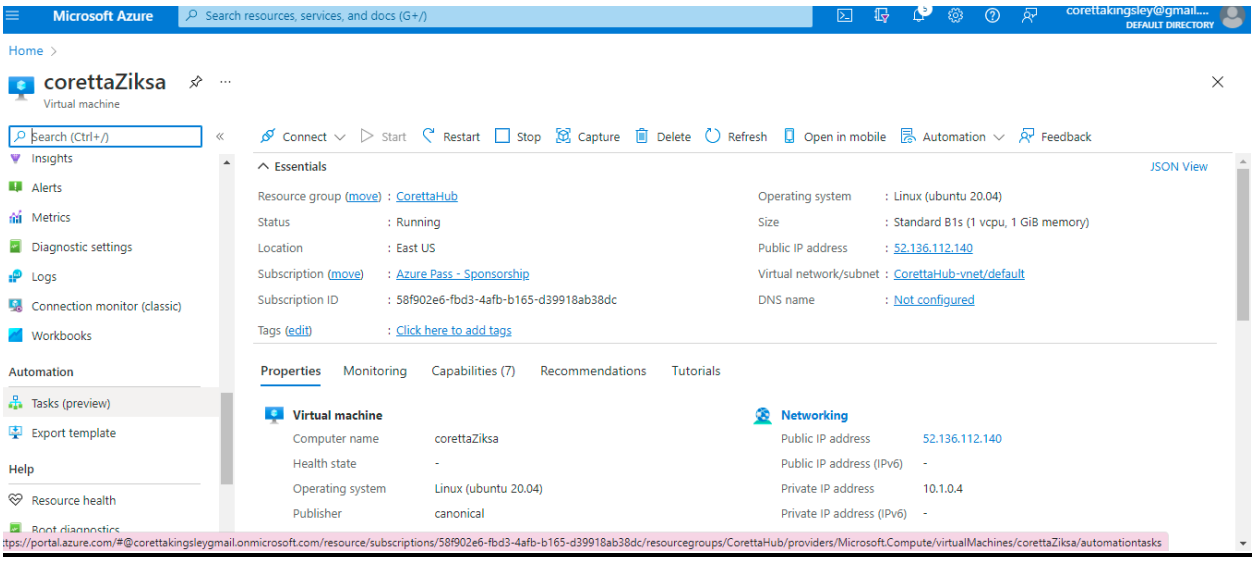
Prerequisites

The following are a requirement in order to create automation tasks using azure:

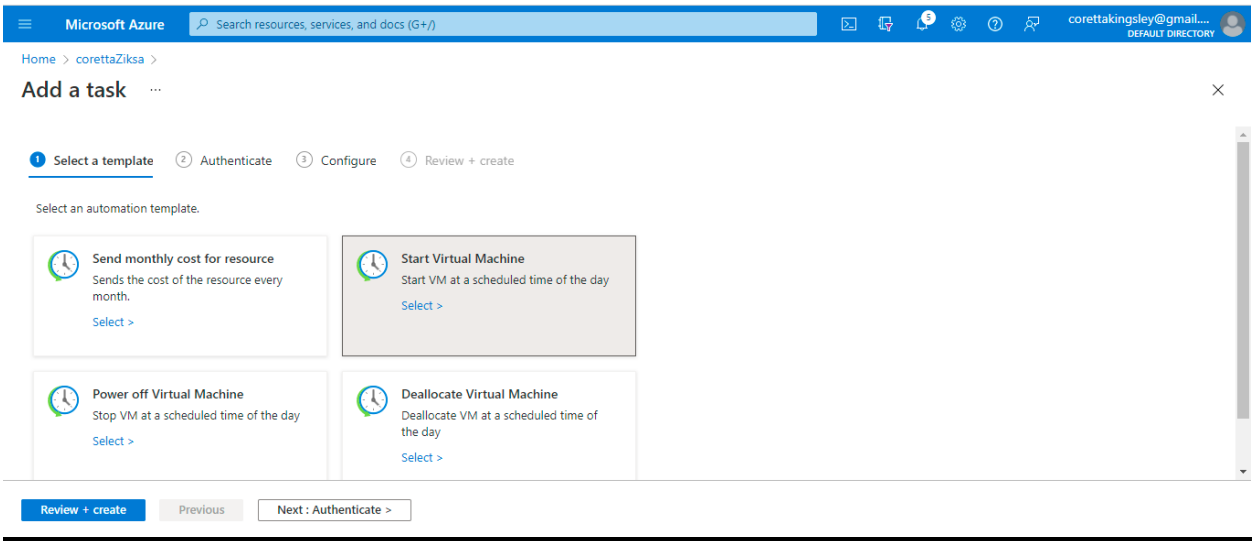
- A Microsoft Azure account with an active subscription. You can sign up for a free subscription here
- A resource to set up an automation task against. This guide will be using a virtual machine, if you provision one, make sure to choose a low-cost SKU and delete the machine afterward. Leave the virtual machine powered off
- An Office365 account to configure the email notification for the task

CREATING AN AUTOMATION TASKS

- Login Azure account
- Go to resources, select create virtual machine
- Scroll down the menu and select task preview under automation
- Select that and it will direct you to adding a task

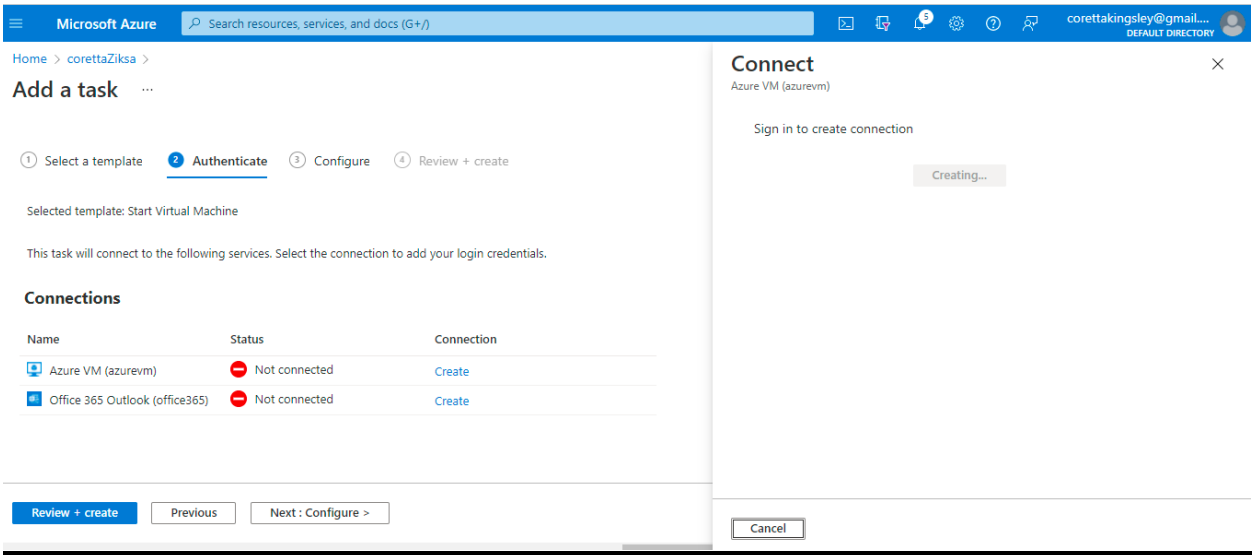


Several task templates will appear, which will differ depending on the type of resource you have selected. For a virtual machine, we see options for sending the monthly cost, starting the virtual machine, and powering off the virtual machine. Click on `Start Virtual Machine`, and then click `Next: Authentication`.

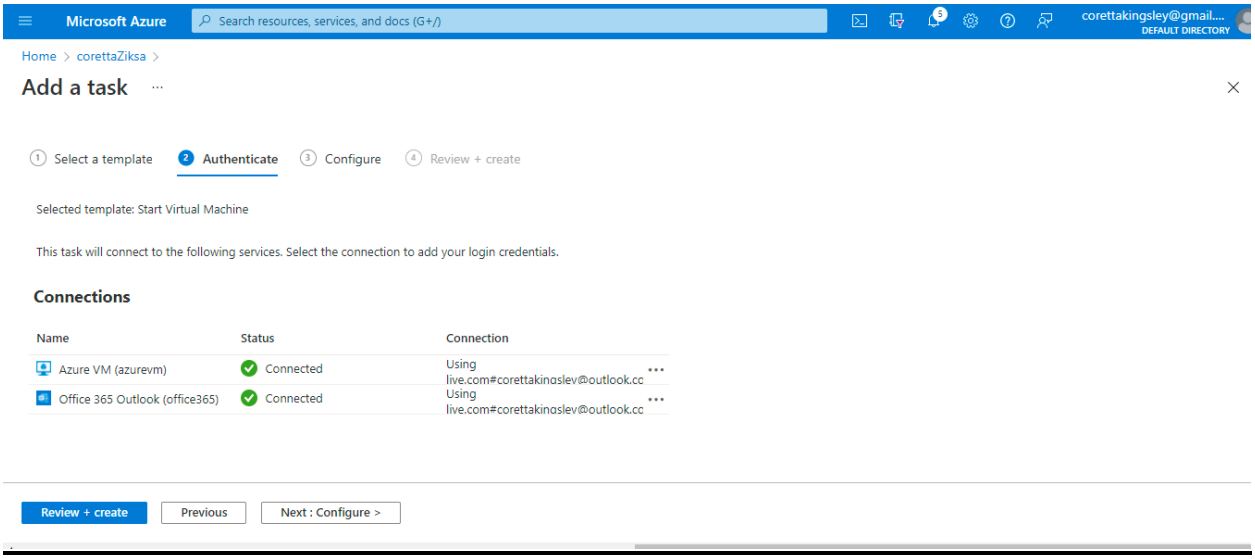


Under the hood, these are creating Logic App API Connections to allow the logic app to interact with the desired resource, to perform the task. The `Start Virtual Machine` task requires you to create an Azure VM connection, as well as an Office 365 Outlook connection. The latter is used to send an email notification, but even if you don't want the email, at this point you still need to configure that connection to be able to create the

Automation Task. Click on create, and then under Create Connection, click on sign in. You will be asked to sign in with your Azure account.

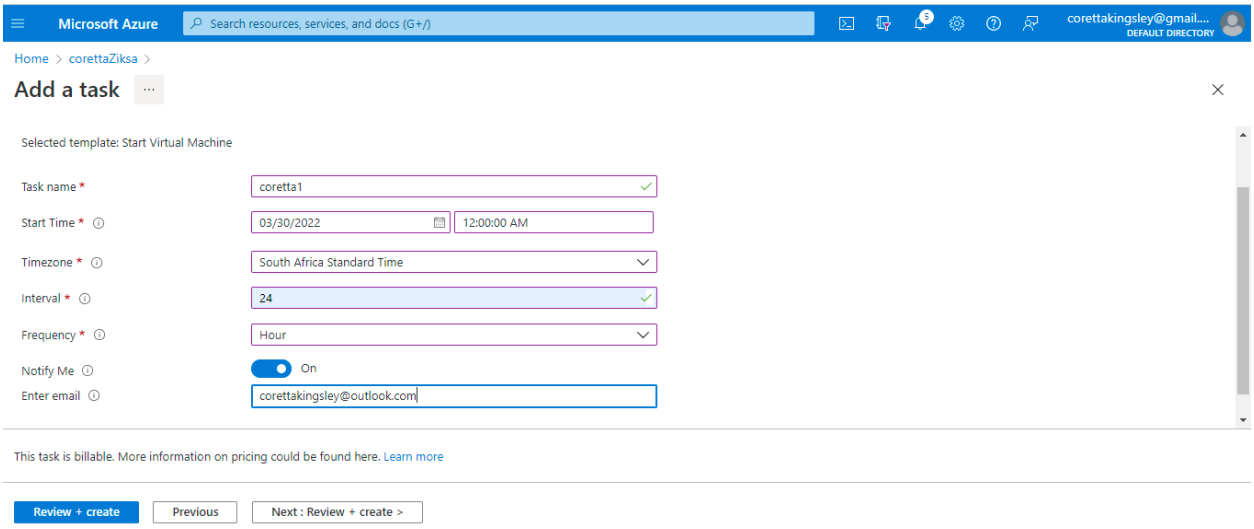


After configuring the connections, the connection status will change to connected.



The final step is to input values for the configuration of the task. These will differ based on the task, but for this example, you need to input a task name, which cannot be changed after the task is created, the time to start the task and the time zone, followed by the interval of how often you want to run the task. In this example, I'm setting the virtual machine to start every 24 hours. If you want to see the task trigger ASAP, I'd suggest setting the start time for a few minutes from now. Optionally, you can configure the task

to notify you after every run. After filling out the configuration, click on `Create` to provision the task.

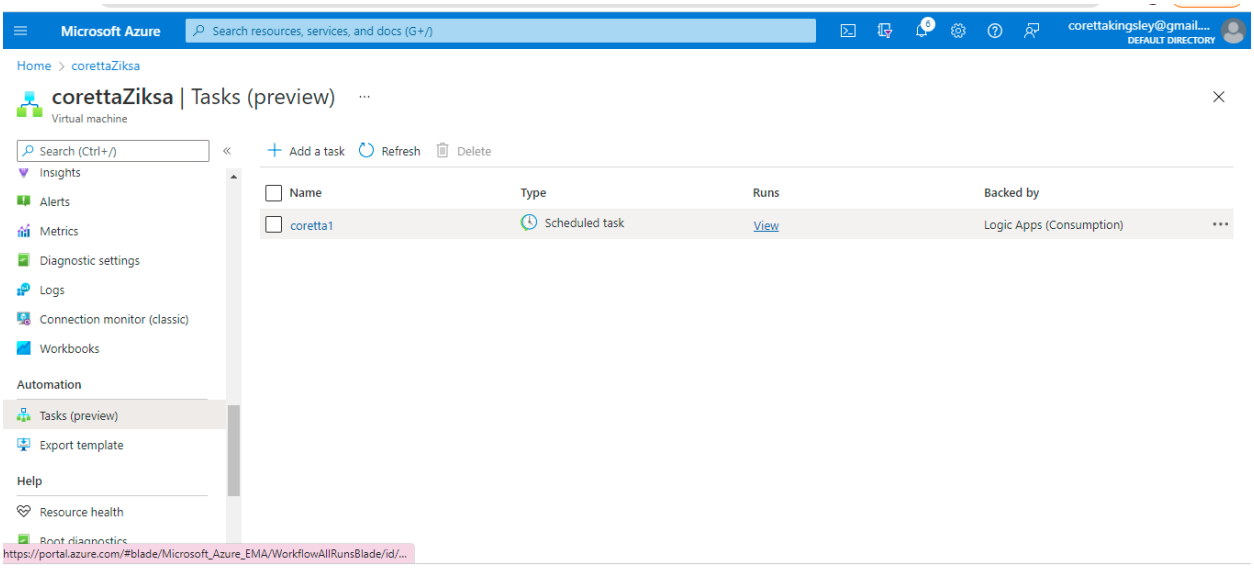


You get returned to the `Tasks` blade on the Azure resource and will see the new task that has been created.

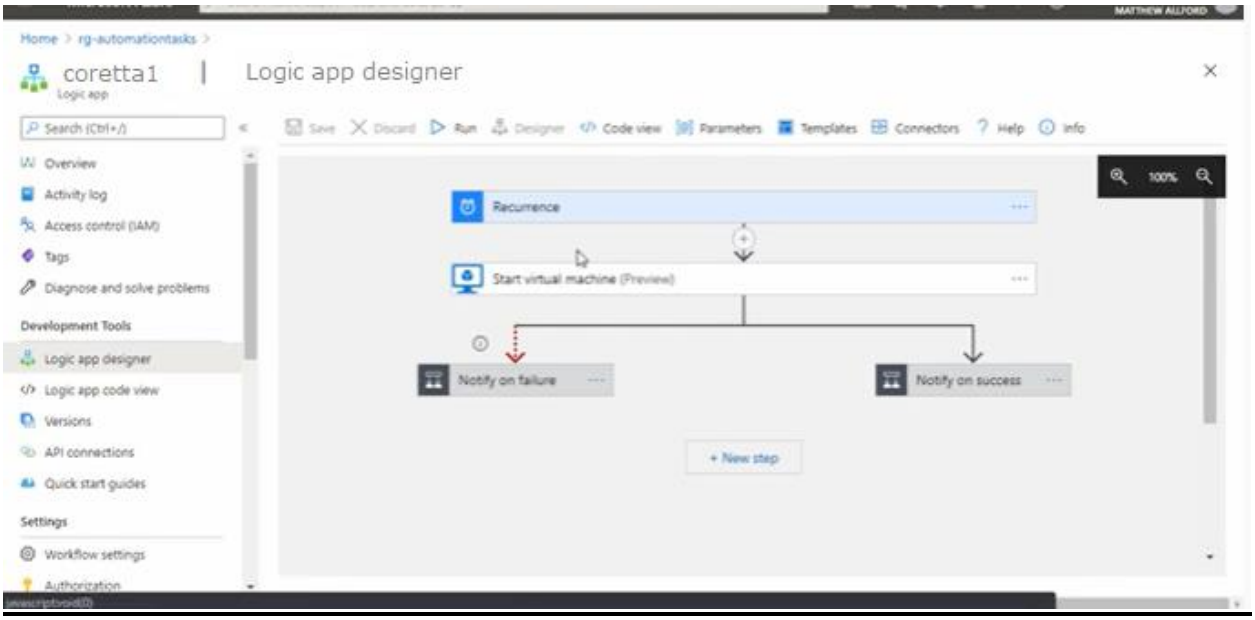
Viewing Task History

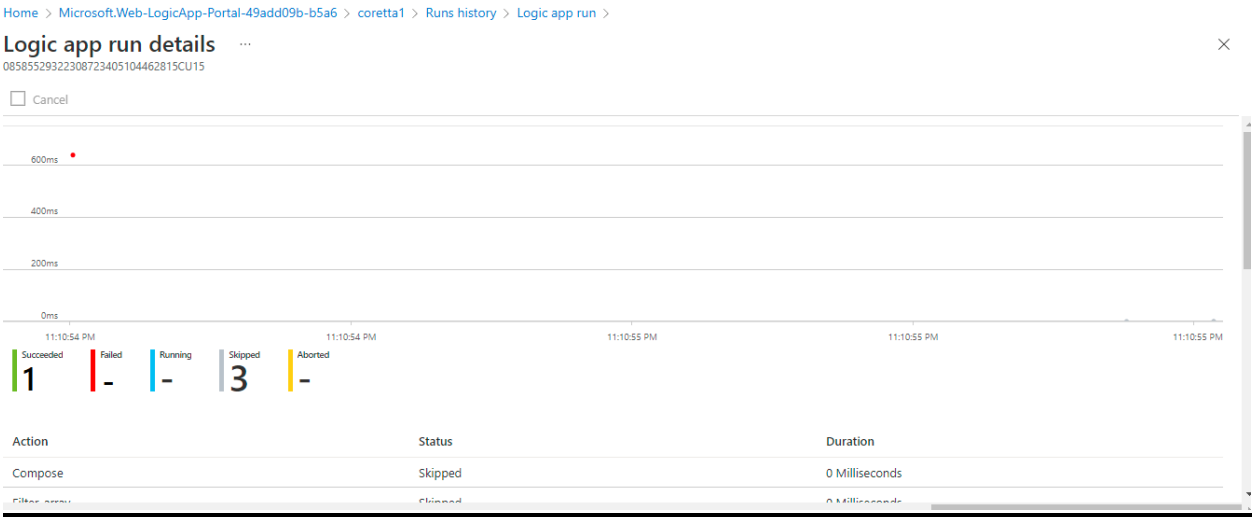
You'll find that after configuring an Automation Task, you will occasionally want to be able to view the history of the task, especially if any failures require investigation.

The history of a task can be shown by clicking on `view` for the selected task.



You will be presented with the history of runs for that specific Automation Task, with a summary of the status, start time, and duration of the task.

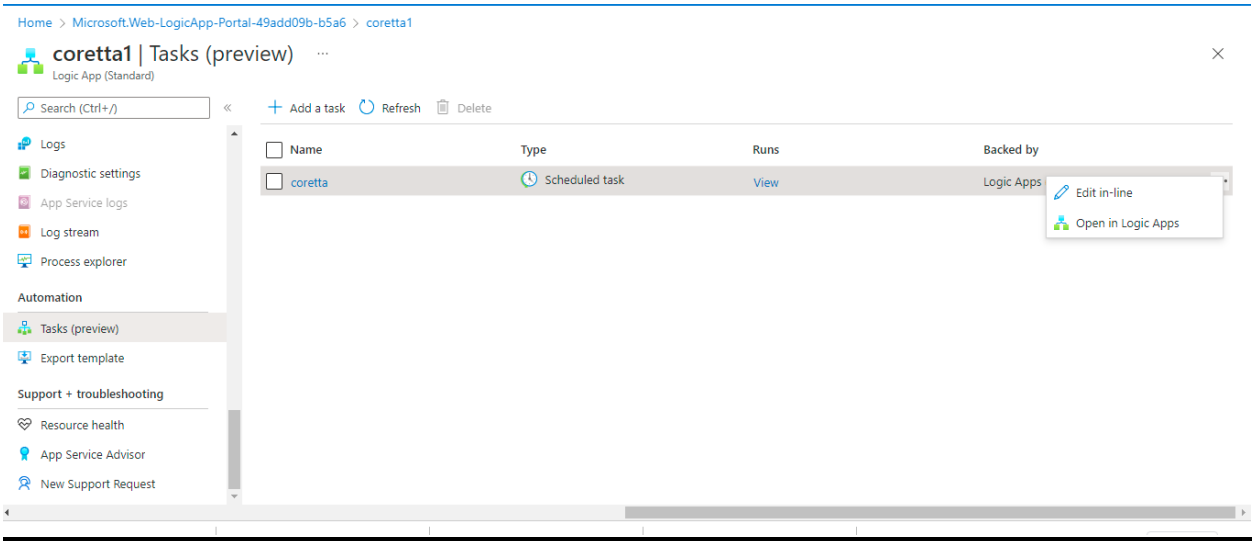


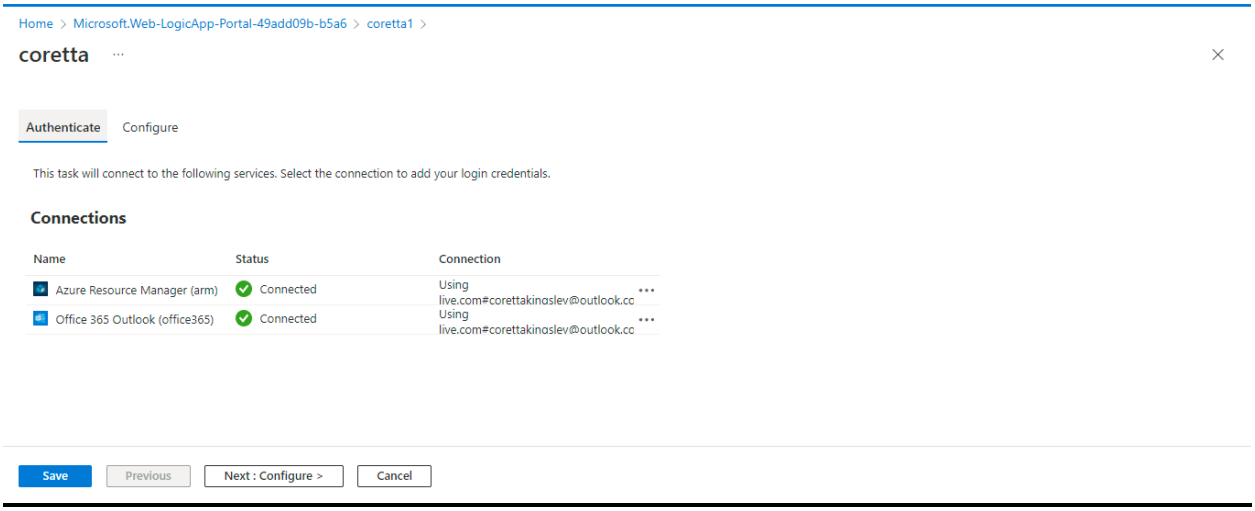


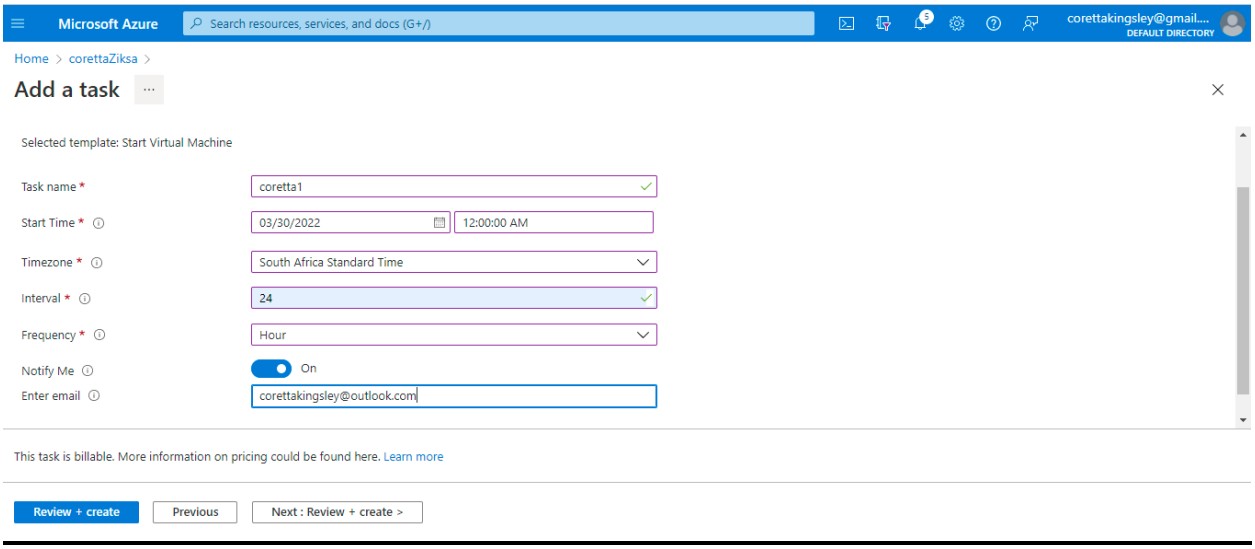
Editing an Automation Task

For a simple edit of the task, you can click on the ellipsis for the task you want to edit, and then choose `Edit in-line`. This will take you through the same workflow as when

you created the task, allowing you to edit the connections and the basic configuration of the task.

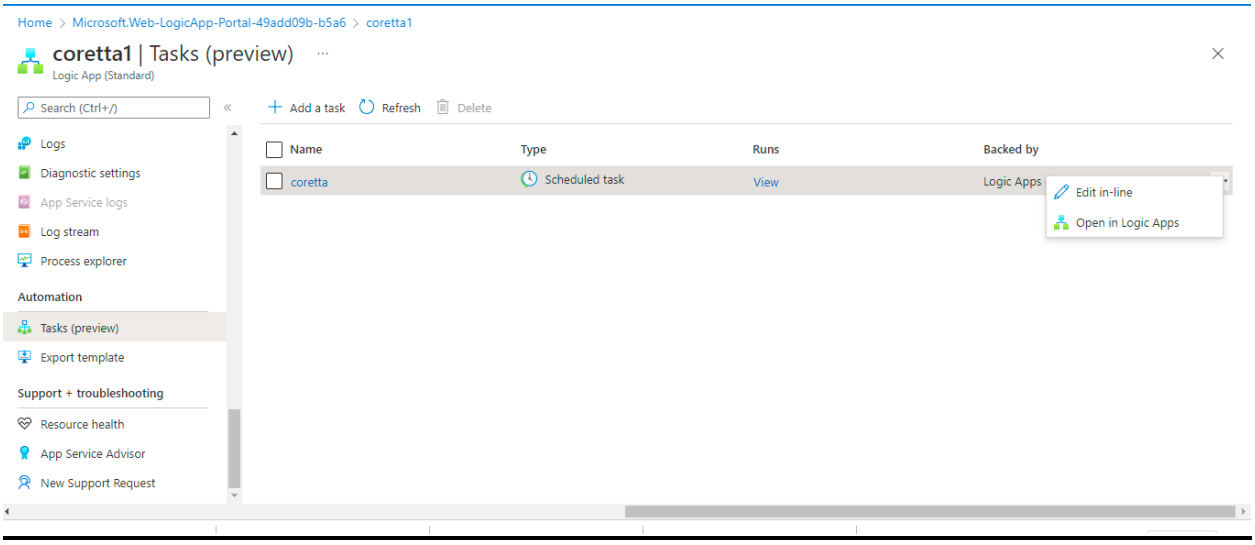






If you want to make changes to the underlying steps that the task is performing, you can choose to edit the task in Logic Apps, which will allow you to use the Logic App designer and code to change the task. If you choose to do this, it can be a good idea to clone the logic app first, and test your changes there, before you modify the logic app linked to the Automation Task.

To edit the Automation Task in logic apps, click on the ellipsis for the task, and this time click on `Open in Logic Apps`.



You get taken to the overview page for the underlying logic app of this Automation Task, where you can view the run information, metrics, and the steps that comprise this task. To clone the app, there is an option at the top of the overview pane:

Discussion

With this project task, I learned what an Azure Automation task is, configured an Automation Task to power on a virtual machine, and explored options for editing an existing Automation Task. Now I can start to experiment with automation tasks in Azure to make my life easier!

I like the idea behind this new feature, which is to surface pre-configured workflows for popular management capabilities in Azure. Over time, I'd like to see some sort of public library to be made available, where community members can submit Automation Tasks that can be consumed via the Azure Portal.