

Filling the gap between Terraform and Argo CD

Nathanael Liechti

Cloud Native Bern Meetup, 26th November 2025

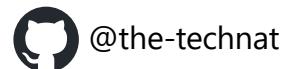


Speaker



Nathanael Liechti
Kubernetes Platform Engineer / CS Student

hobbies: Cycling 🚴 & Biketouring 🚳



Agenda

- 1 Why an Argo CD provider?
- 2 History of the provider
- 3 Use Case @ Swiss Post
- 4 Use Case : Registering Clusters to central Argo CD
- 5 Use Case : Creating API Tokens for service accounts
- 6 Use Case : Terraform Onboarding Module

Why an Argo CD Provider?



Why an Argo CD Provider?

Why an Argo CD Provider?

I thought Argo CD already allowed for 100% declarative configuration?

Wouldn't using the Kubernetes provider to handle Argo CD configuration be enough?

Benefits using the Argo CD Provider

Cluster-independent (you don't need access to the Kubernetes API to configure Argo CD)

```
provider "argocd" {
  server_addr = "argocd.local:443"
  auth_token  = "1234..."
}

provider "argocd" {
  use_local_config = true
}

provider "argocd" {
  auth_token    = "1234..."
  port_forward = true
}

provider "argocd" {
  core = true
}
```

Benefits using the Argo CD Provider

Atomic configuration			
Sample File	Resource Name	Kind	Description
<code>argocd-cm.yaml</code>	argocd-cm	ConfigMap	General Argo CD configuration
<code>argocd-repositories.yaml</code>	my-private-repo / istio-helm-repo / private-helm-repo / private-repo	Secrets	Sample repository connection details
<code>1</code>			

▶ `kubectl api-resources |grep argo`
applications
applicationsets
appprojects

 Argo CD - Declarative GitOps CD for Kubernetes

true
true
true

Application
ApplicationSet
AppProject

Argo CD - Declarative GitOps CD for Kubernetes			
Sample File	Resource Name	Kind	Description
<code>argocd-cm.secret.yaml</code>	argocd-secret	SECRET	User Passwords, Certificates (deprecated), Signing Key, Dex secrets, Webhook secrets
<code>argocd-rbac-cm.yaml</code>	argocd-rbac-cm	ConfigMap	RBAC Configuration
<code>argocd-tls-certs-cm.yaml</code>	argocd-tls-certs-cm	ConfigMap	Custom TLS certificates for connecting Git repositories via HTTPS (v1.2 and later)
<code>argocd-ssh-known-hosts-cm.yaml</code>	argocd-ssh-known-hosts-cm	ConfigMap	SSH known hosts data for connecting Git repositories via SSH (v1.2 and later)

Benefits using the Argo CD Provider

```
apiVersion: argoproj.io/v1alpha1
kind: AppProject
metadata:
  name: meetup
  namespace: argocd
spec:
  descriptor: <redacted>
  destination:
    - namespaces:
        server: <redacted>
      roles:
        - name: <redacted>
          policy:
            - p, !<redacted>
  sourceNamespace: <redacted>
  argocd:
    sourceRepository: <redacted>
    - '*'
```

```
resource "argocd_project" "meetup" {
  metadata {
    name      = "meetup"
    namespace = "argocd"
  }

  spec {
    <redacted>
  }
}
```

```
"p, proj:someotherproject:testrole, applications, sync, meetup/*, allow",
  ]
}
}
}
```

```
Plan: 1 to add, 0 to change, 0 to destroy.
kubernetes_manifest.test-crd: Creating ...
kubernetes_manifest.test-crd: Creation complete after 0s
```

```
Apply complete! Resources: 1 added, 0 changed, 0 destroyed.
```

Error: failed to expand project

```
with argocd_project.meetup,
on main.tf line 16, in resource "argocd_project" "meetup":
16: resource "argocd_project" "meetup" {
  invalid policy rule 'p, proj:someotherproject:testrole, applications, sync, meetup/*, allow': policy subject must be: 'proj:meetup:testrole', not
  'proj:someotherproject:testrole'
```

Benefits using the Argo CD Provider

```
~ ~ module.eks_post.kubernetes_manifest.chaoskube_app [ ]  
  manifest :  
    spec :  
      source :  
        targetRevision : "int" → "develop"  
        ... 3 unchanged attributes hidden  
    }  
    ... 4 unchanged attributes hidden  
  }  
  ... 3 unchanged attributes hidden  
}  
object :  
  spec :  
    source :  
      targetRevision : "int" → "develop"  
      ... 6 unchanged attributes hidden
```

```
~ ~ module.eks_post.kubernetes_manifest.chaoskube_app [ ]  
  ✓ Updated 1s
```

```
~ ~ module.eks_post.argocd_application.chaoskube[0] [ ]  
  id : "chaoskube:argo(cd)"  
  ... 4 unchanged attributes hidden  
  spec {  
    ... 2 unchanged attributes hidden  
    source {  
      target_revision : "int" → "develop"
```

```
~ ~ module.eks_post.argocd_application.chaoskube[0] [ ]  
  ✓ Updated id=chaoskube:argo(cd) 6s
```

History of the Provider

Beginnings of the Provider



argocd

by:[oboukili](#)

Continuous Integration/Deployment (CI/CD)

This Provider was migrated to - <https://registry.t>

VERSION

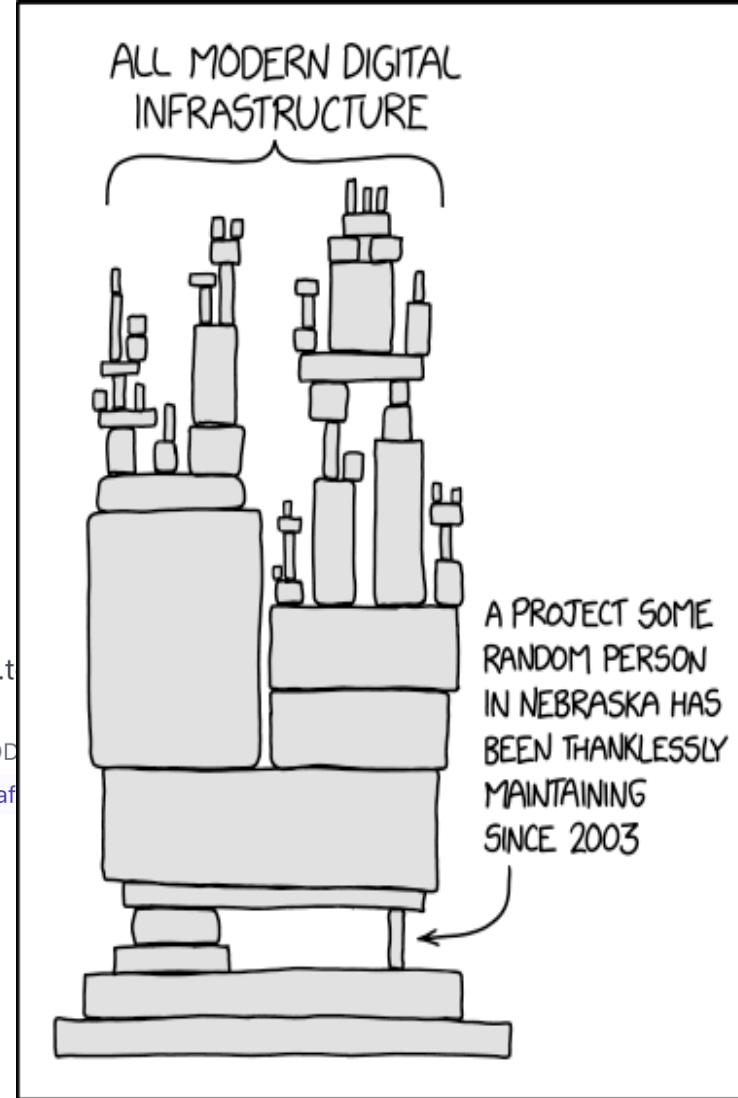
6.2.0

PUBLISHED

a year ago

SOURCE COD

[oboukili/terr](#)



Provider Downloads	All versions ▾
Downloads this week	41,551
Downloads this month	229,720
Downloads this year	3.1M
Downloads over all time	11.6M

Let's make it official

Thread # argo-contributors



Marco Kilchhofer 2 hours ago

Hi folks,

Are there some argo maintainers here who are also very interested in terraform? It seems that there



Blake Pettersson (akuity.io) Mar 6th, 2024 at 2:18 PM

I guess for interests sake, are you guys at swisspost willing to help maintain this?



4 replies



Michael Crenshaw 2 hours ago

I'd be in favor of that. Looks well-maintained.



Blake Pettersson 1 hour ago

I use it at [\\$dayjob](#) for registering clusters to argocd, I like it !

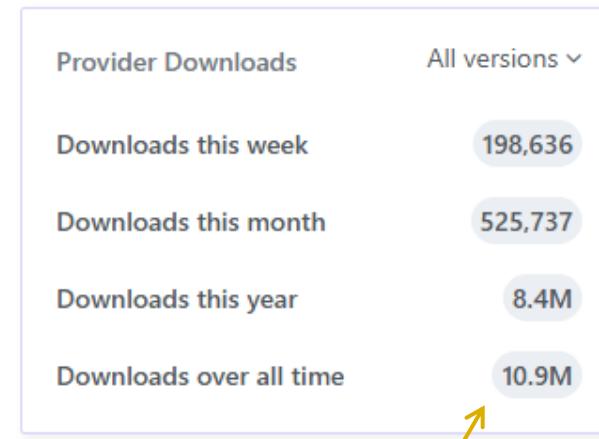
Official Argo CD Provider!



argocd
by [argoproj-labs](#)

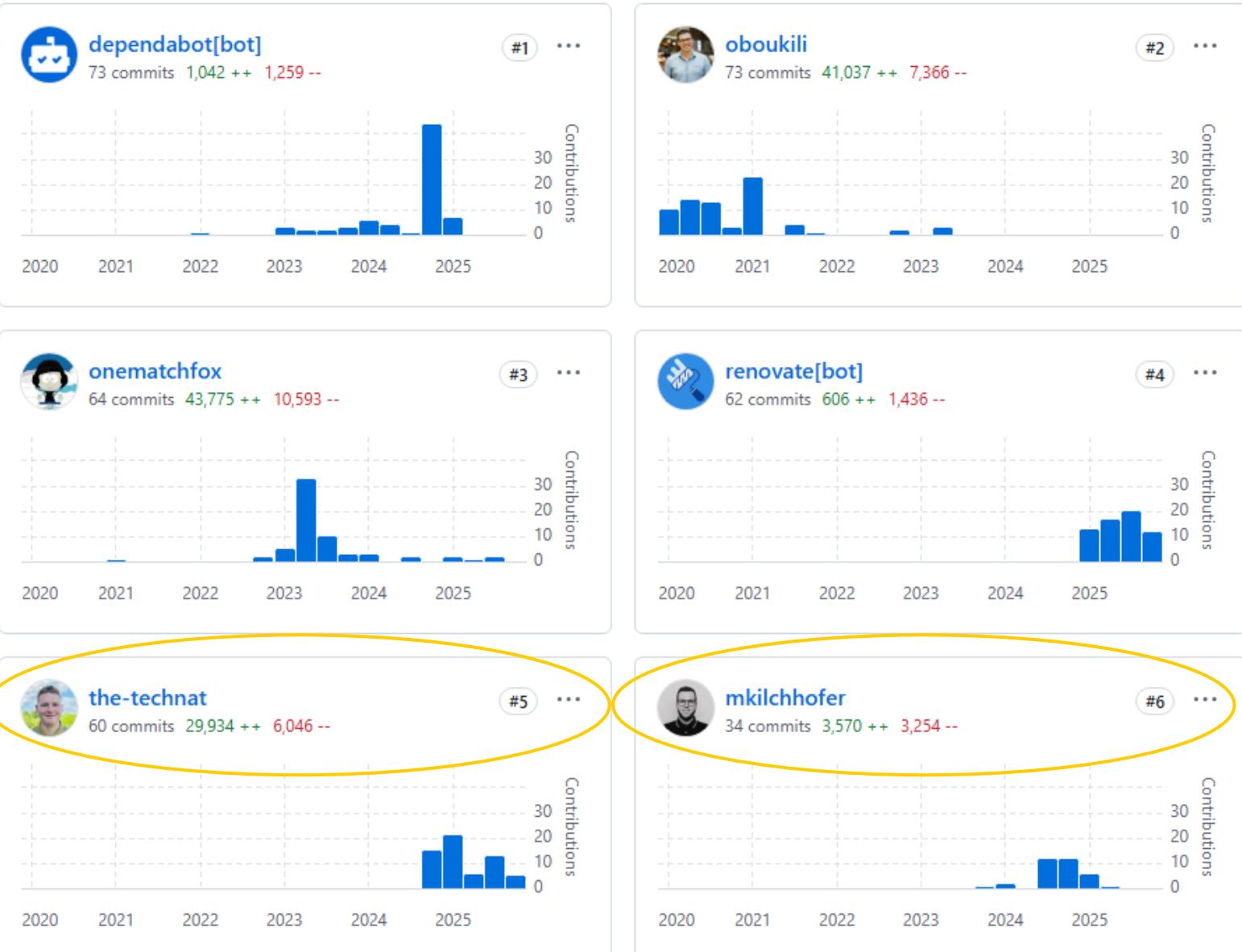
Continuous Integration/Deployment (CI/CD)

VERSION	PUBLISHED	SOURCE CODE
7.12.0	a day ago	argoproj-labs/terraform-provider-argocd



(since April 2024)

How does maintaining go?



Use Case @ Swiss Post

K8s@Swiss Post factoids

We strive for 100% automation

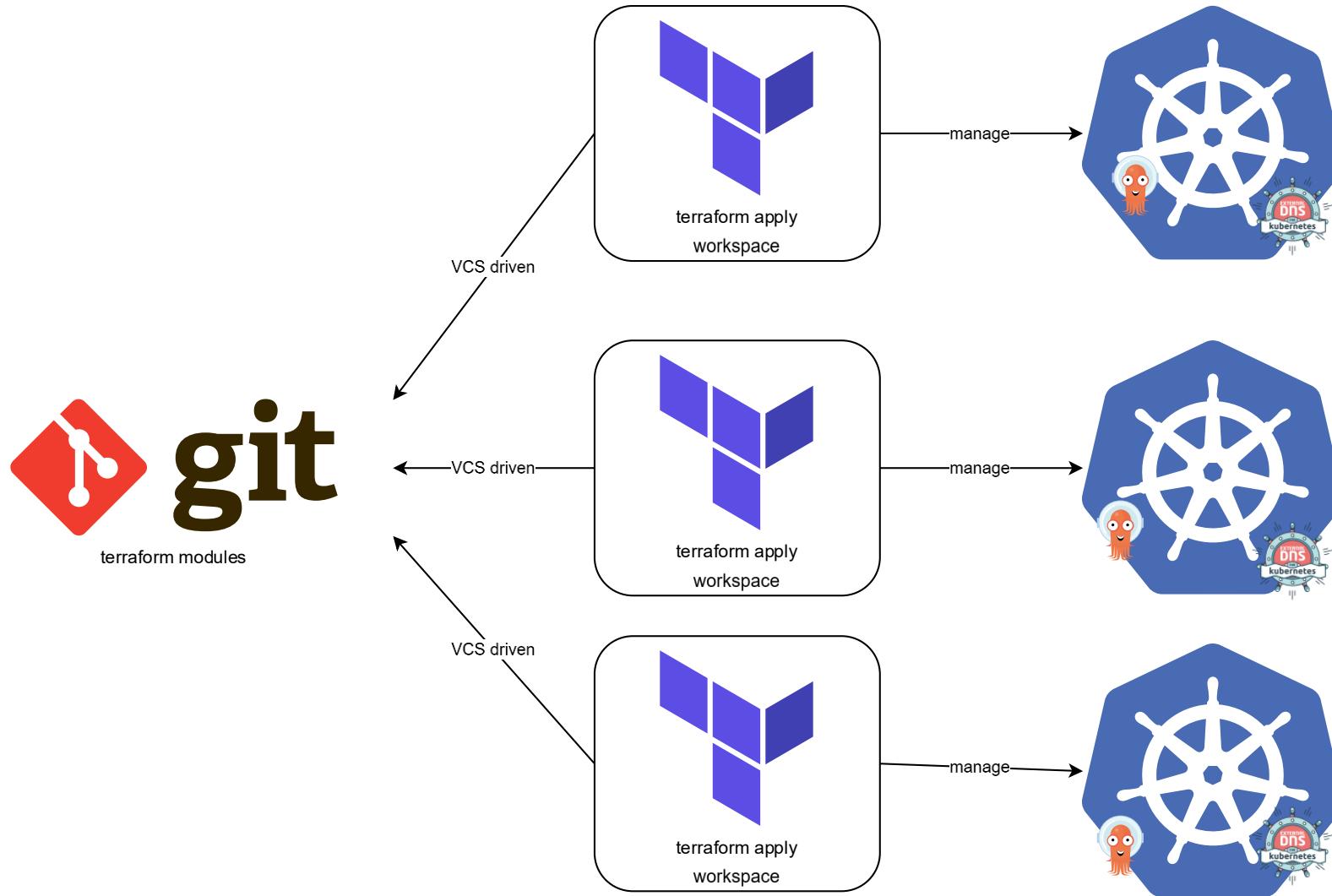
We have shared clusters per business unit

Our clusters can be managed independently

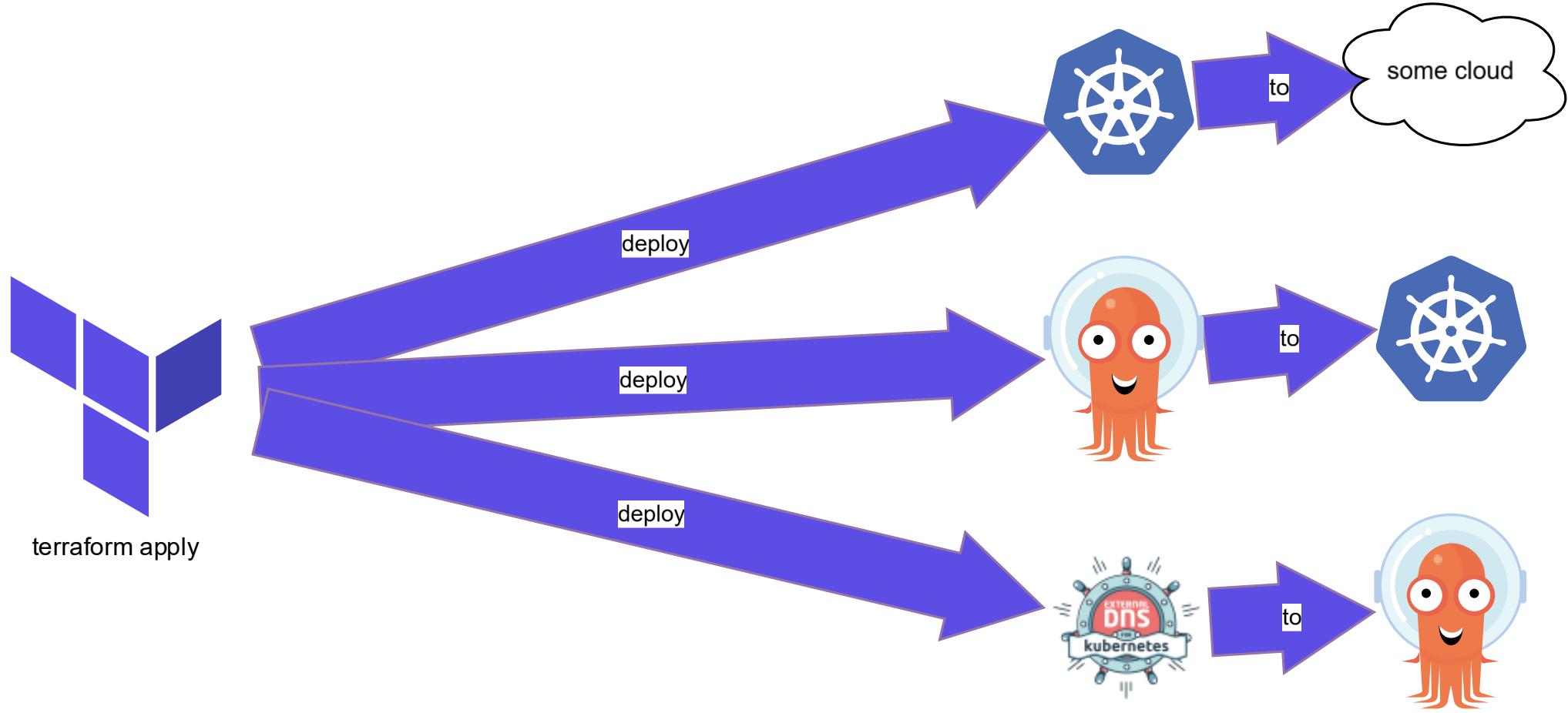
We manage everything using Terraform and deploy infrastructure addons using Argo CD

All our clusters should be configured the same with only a small degree of customization

Swiss Post's Deployment Model



Deploying a cluster in one run



Install EKS Cluster using AWS Provider

```
1 module "eks" {
2   source  = "terraform-aws-modules/eks/aws"
3   version = "~> 21.0"
4
5   name          = "meetup_cluster"
6   kubernetes_version = "1.33"
7
8   compute_config = {
9     enabled      = true
10    node_pools = ["general-purpose"]
11  }
12
13  vpc_id       = "vpc-1234556abcdef"
14  subnet_ids  = ["subnet-abcd-e012", "subnet-bcde012a", "subnet-fghi345a"]
15 }
```

Install Terraform using Helm Provider

```
1 resource "helm_release" "argocd" {
2   name      = "argocd"
3   repository = "oci://ghcr.io/argoproj/argo-helm/"
4   chart      = "argo-cd"
5   version    = "9.1.3"
6   namespace  = "argocd"
7   wait       = true
8
9   set {
10     name  = "configs.secret.argocdServerAdminPassword"
11     value = bcrypt_hash.argocd_password.id
12   }
13
14  depends_on = [
15    module.eks_cluster
16  ]
17 }
```

Helm Provider Declaration

```
1 provider "helm" {
2   kubernetes {
3     host                  = module.eks.cluster_endpoint
4     cluster_ca_certificate = base64decode(module.eks.cluster_certificate_authority_data)
5
6     exec {
7       api_version = "client.authentication.k8s.io/v1beta1"
8       command     = "aws"
9       args        = ["eks", "get-token", "--cluster-name", module.eks.cluster_name, "--output", "json"]
10    }
11  }
12 }
```

Create Argo CD Apps

```
1 resource "argocd_application" "external_dns" {
2   metadata {
3     name      = "external-dns"
4     namespace = "argocd"
5   }
6   wait = true
7   spec {
8     project = "swisspost-addons"
9     source {
10       path          = "helm"
11       repo_url      = "https://(...).git"
12       target_revision = int
13       helm { value_files = ["values.yaml", "EKS-values.yaml"] }
14     }
15     destination {
16       server      = "https://kubernetes.default.svc"
17       namespace = kubernetes_namespace.external_dns[0].metadata[0].name
18     }
19   }
20   depends_on = [helm_release.argocd]
21 }
```

Argo CD Provider Declaration

```
1 provider "argocd" {
2   username = "admin"
3   password = random_password.argocd_password.result
4
5   port_forward_with_namespace = "argocd"
6
7   kubernetes {
8     host                  = module.eks.cluster_endpoint
9     cluster_ca_certificate = base64decode(module.eks.cluster_certificate_authority_data)
10
11    exec {
12      api_version = "client.authentication.k8s.io/v1beta1"
13      command     = "aws"
14      args        = ["eks", "get-token", "--cluster-name", module.eks.cluster_name, "--output", "json"]
15    }
16  }
17 }
```

Important Facts about this deployment model

Don't update the control-plane and helm/k8s things in the same run

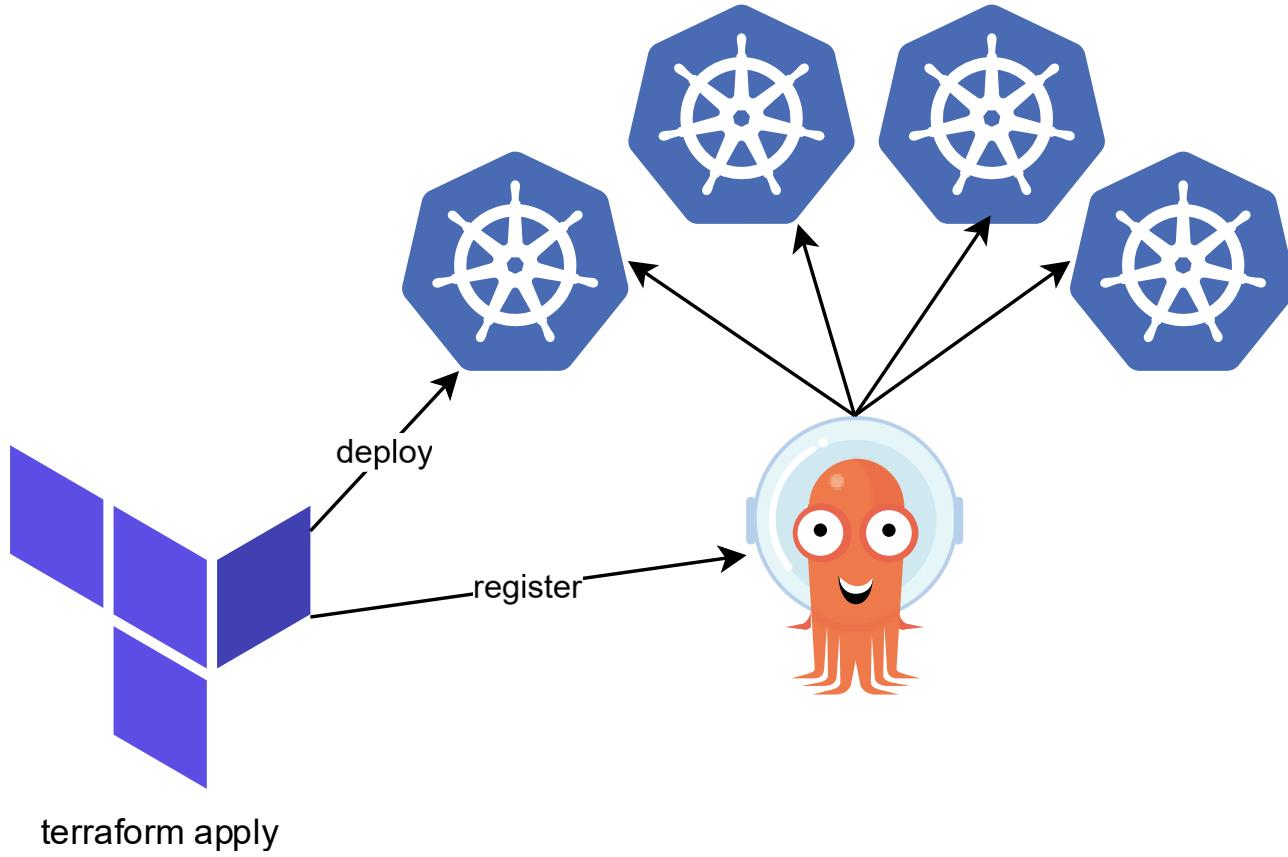
Create and Delete works tough

⚠️ WARNING

When using interpolation to pass credentials to the Kubernetes provider from other resources, these resources SHOULD NOT be created in the same Terraform module where Kubernetes provider resources are also used. This will lead to intermittent and unpredictable errors which are hard to debug and diagnose. The root issue lies with the order in which Terraform itself evaluates the provider blocks vs. actual resources. Please refer to [this section of Terraform docs](#) for further explanation.

Use Case: Registering clusters in Argo CD

Use Case: Registering Clusters in Argo CD

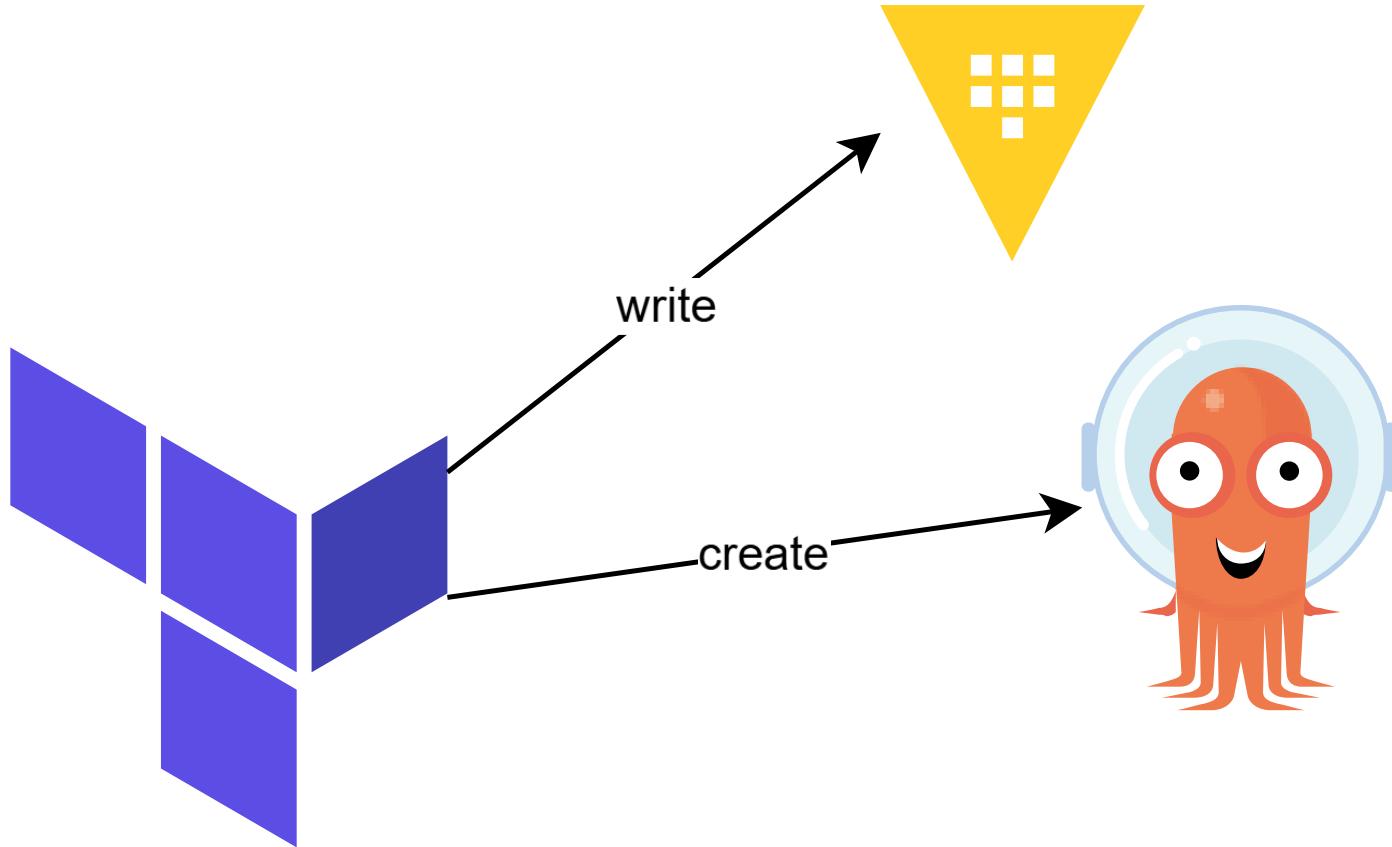


Use Case: Registering Clusters in Argo CD

```
1 resource "argocd_cluster" "eks" {
2   server      = format("https://%s", module.eks.cluster_endpoint)
3   name        = "meetup_cluster"
4   namespaces  = ["default", "optional"]
5
6   config {
7     aws_auth_config {
8       cluster_name = "meetup_cluster"
9       role_arn    = "arn:aws:iam::<123456789012>:role/<role-name>"
10    }
11    tls_client_config {
12      ca_data = base64decode(module.eks.cluster_certificate_authority_data)
13    }
14  }
15 }
```

Use Case: Generate project/account tokens

Use Case: Generating tokens

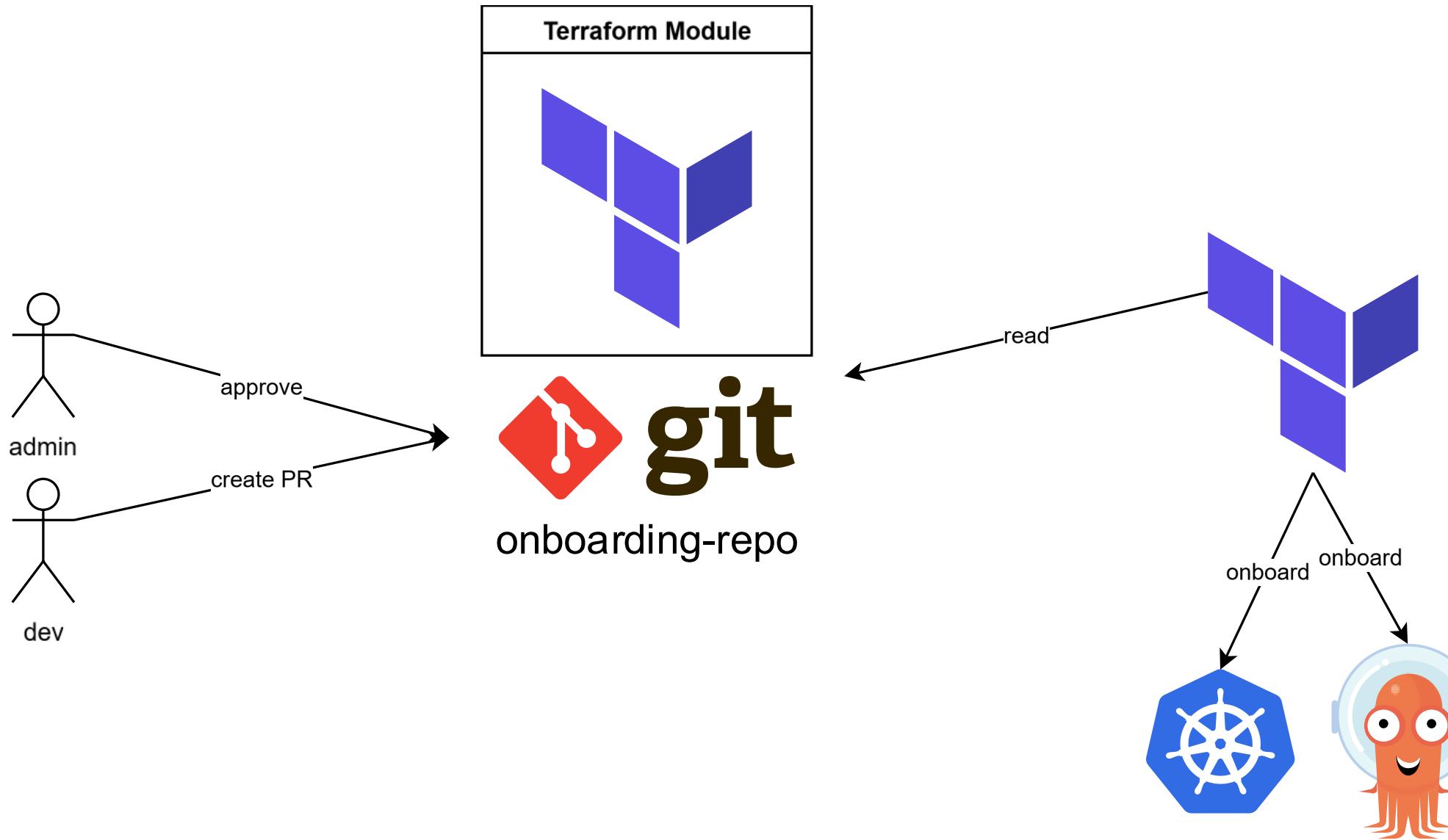


Use Case: Generating tokens

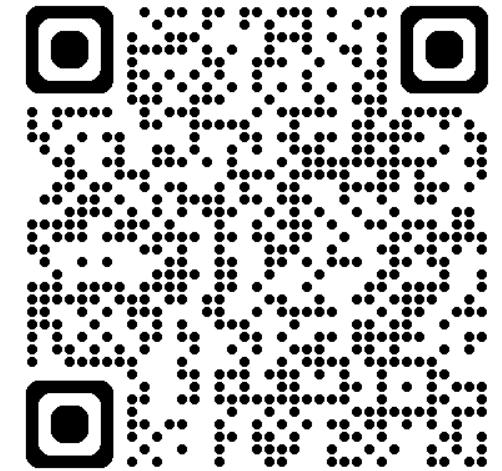
```
1 resource "argocd_project_token" "secret" {
2   project      = "someproject"
3   role         = "foobar"
4   description  = "short lived token"
5   expires_in   = "1h"
6   renew_before = "30m"
7 }
8
9 resource "vault_kv_secret_v2" "example" {
10  mount        = vault_mount.kvv2.path
11  name         = "argocd_token"
12  data_json    = jsonencode({ "token" = argocd_project_token.secret.jwt })
13 }
14
```

Use Case: Terraform Onboarding

Use Case: Terraform Onboarding Module



Talk Recommendation: Terraform Onboarding Module



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oJAZpLAPtg>

Summary



The UX is better using the Argo CD Terraform Provider



Use Cases are very specific and narrow



OSS is hard

**Danke, Merci,
Grazie, Thank you**

