





Restricting Access to Azure Storage Account Using Shared Access Signature (SAS)

Shared access signature utilizes a URL to grant restricted access to Azure resources for a limited time period.

ICON KEY

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Lab Scenario

Shared access signature enables the implementation of a fine-grained access control to an Azure storage account. It also helps in restricting access to an Azure storage account. A user with a SAS can only access a specific storage account within a limited timeframe.

Lab Objectives

In this lab, you will learn how to create a new storage account; how to generate a SAS connection string, token, and URL that can be utilized to restrict access to the storage account; how to install Azure Storage Explorer, and how to regulate access to an Azure storage account using SAS.

In this lab you will:

- Create a new storage account
- Generate a SAS token to restrict access to an Azure storage account
- Install Azure Storage Explorer
- Restrict access to an Azure storage account using SAS URI

Lab Environment

To perform this lab, you need the following:

- Admin Machine VM
- Registered Microsoft Azure account

Lab Duration

Time: 20 minutes

Overview of SAS

Shared access signature is a uniform resource identifier (URI) that provides restricted access to Azure storage resources. Cloud security engineers can not only provide a SAS to clients or users who cannot be trusted with the storage account key, but also delegate access to specific storage account resources. By providing a SAS URI to these individuals, access to specific resources can be granted a particular time period.

A shared access signature (SAS) helps in providing a fine-grained access control over an Azure storage account. A SAS token helps you control the data that can be shared with a client. SAS is recommended over storage access keys for configuring Azure storage access.

Lab Tasks

Note: Web applications in a cloud environment may undergo frequent updates. As we are working on a cloud-based environment for this lab (i.e., Azure), the application interface may be updated with time. Hence, in case you happen to work on an updated version of Azure, the user interface you see on the application might differ from what you see in the lab. Consequently, the steps and screenshots demonstrated in this lab might also differ.

Note: Before starting this lab, you should create an Azure Free Account using the following link: <https://azure.microsoft.com/free>, in case you have already not created it for the previous module. Once the registration is complete, perform the following tasks:

Note: You can also use any existing Azure account but be aware that it may incur significant charges to your account.

TASK 1

Creating a New Storage Account in Azure

1. Launch the **Admin Machine** VM. Log in with the following credentials: username **Admin** and password **admin@123**.

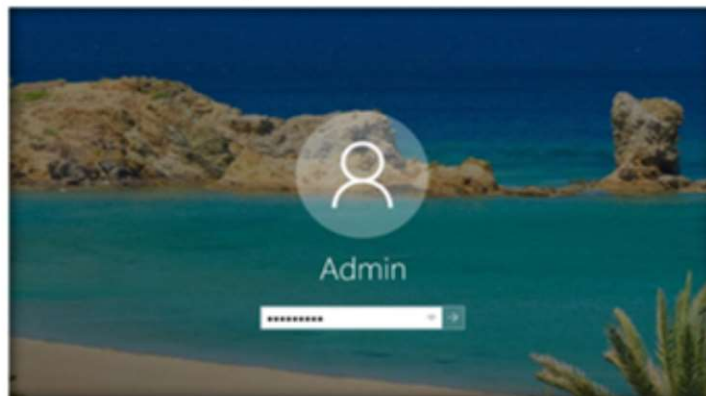


FIGURE 4.7.1: Launch Admin Machine and Log in

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2. To open the browser, double-click on the **Google Chrome** icon on the desktop.



FIGURE 4.7.2: Navigating to the Chrome Browser from Taskbar

3. The **Google Chrome** browser opens. Go to the address bar, type <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-in/account/>, and press **Enter**.

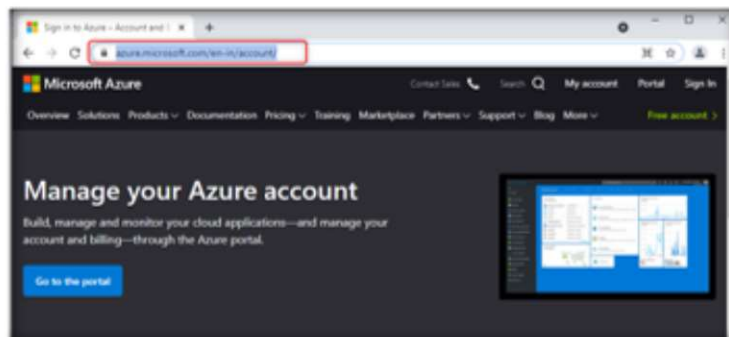


FIGURE 4.7.3: Entering the URL of Microsoft Azure

4. The **Microsoft Azure** page will appear. Click on **Portal**.

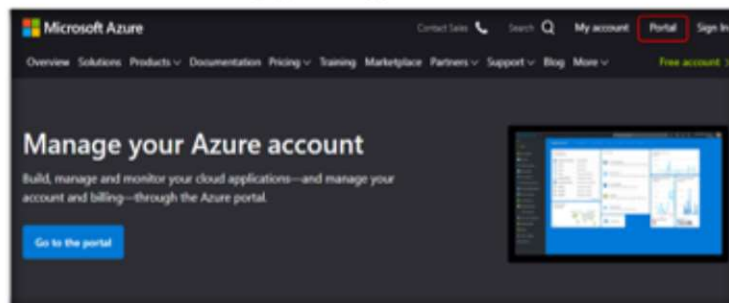


FIGURE 4.7.4: Sign in to Azure Portal

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5. In the Sign in page, enter the **Account ID** and click on **Next**.

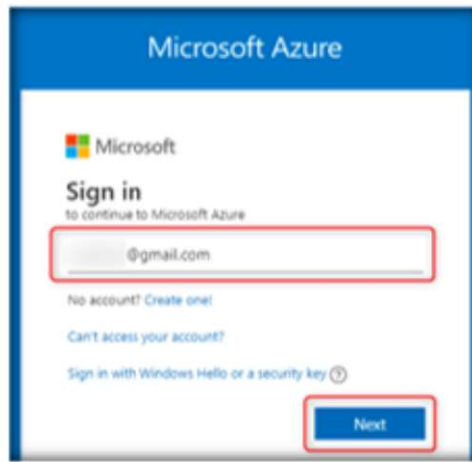


FIGURE 4.7.5: Entering Account ID to continue

6. In the next window, enter the password and click on **Sign in**.



FIGURE 4.7.6: Sign in to Azure Account

7. Microsoft Azure portal will appear now. Click on **Resource groups** under Azure services.

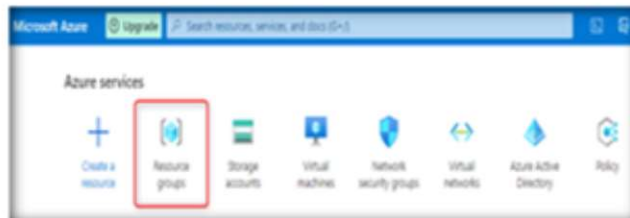


FIGURE 4.7.7: Selecting Resource group in Azure portal

8. Under the **Resource groups** pane, click on the **+Create** button.

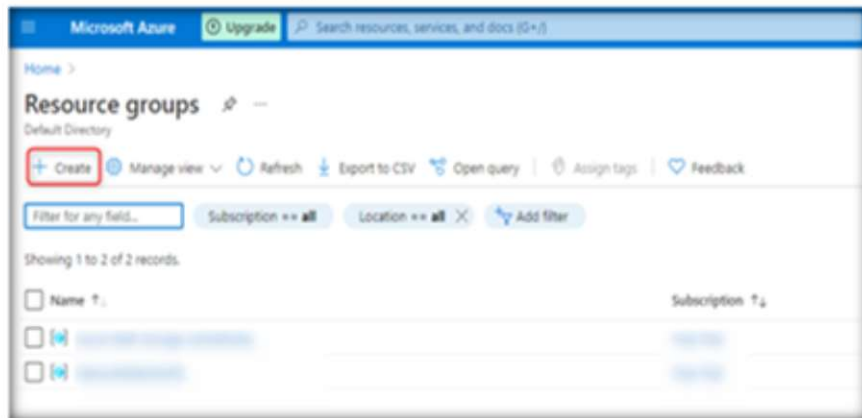


FIGURE 4.7.8: Click on +Create

9. **Create a resource group** page will open now. In the **Resource group** field, enter a **Resource group** name (**SASestRG** in this lab), and in the **Region** field, enter a **Region** name (**(US) East US** in this lab). Now, click on the **Next: Tags>** button.

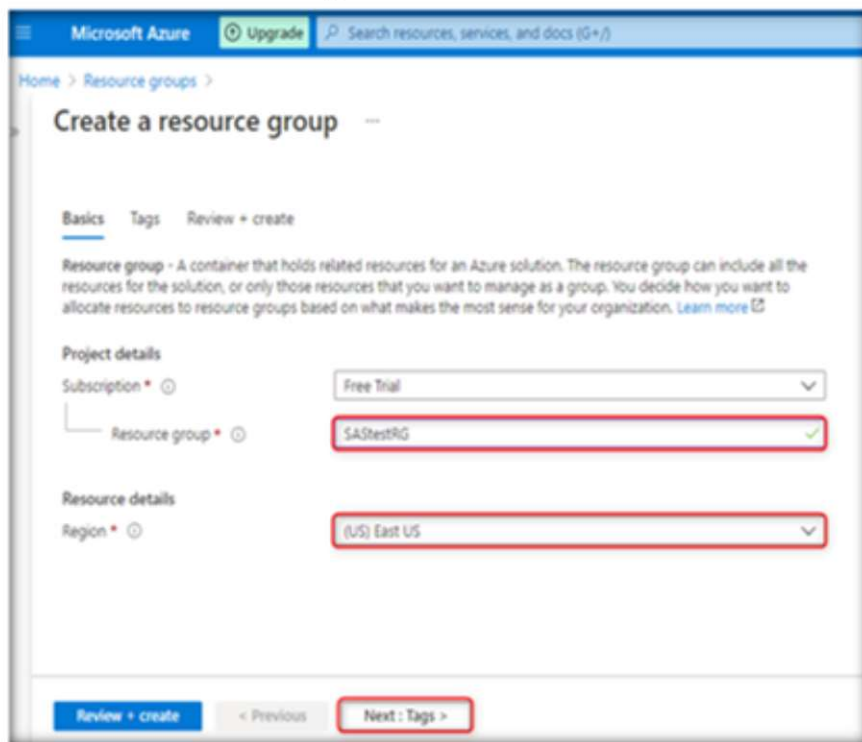


FIGURE 4.7.9: Entering Resource Group Name and Location

10. Retain the default **Tags** tab settings and click on the **Next: Review + create** button.

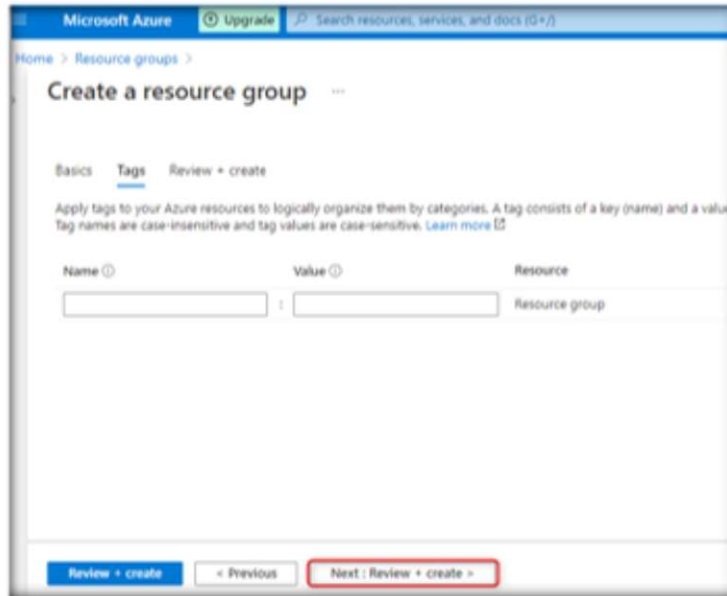


FIGURE 4.7.10: Reviewing and Creating Resource Group

11. A **Review + create** page will appear. Wait for the **Validation passed** message and then click on **Create**.

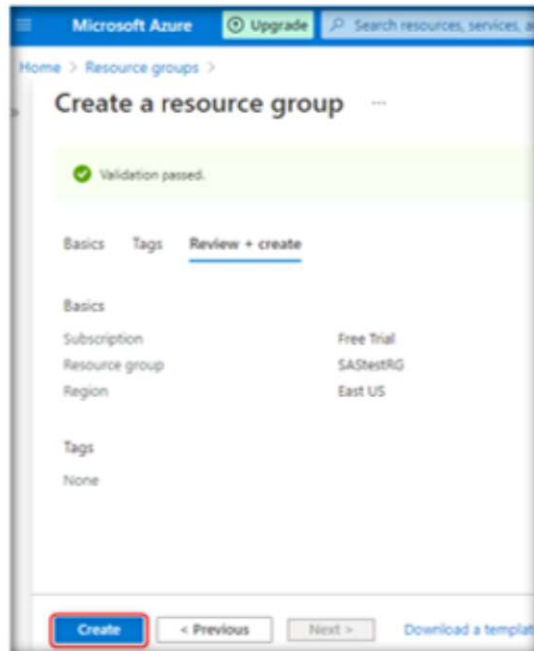


FIGURE 4.7.11: Validation Passed for Creating a Resource Group

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12. Resource group name **SASestRG** is successfully created now.

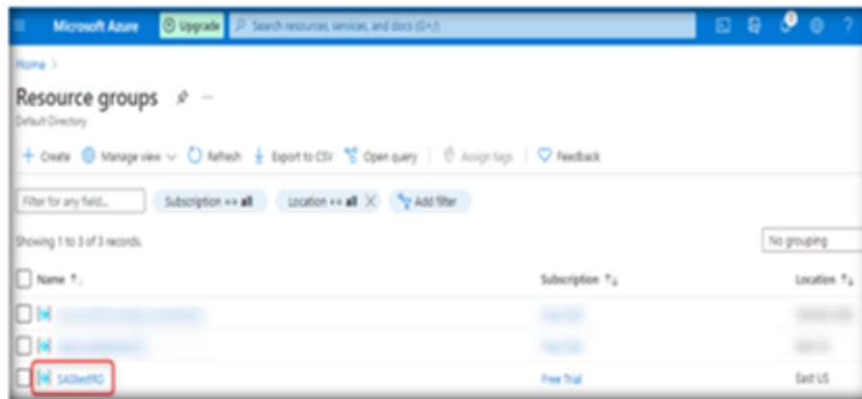


FIGURE 4.7.12: Successfully Creating Resource Group

13. Now, to create a storage account, click on **Storage accounts** under **Azure services**.

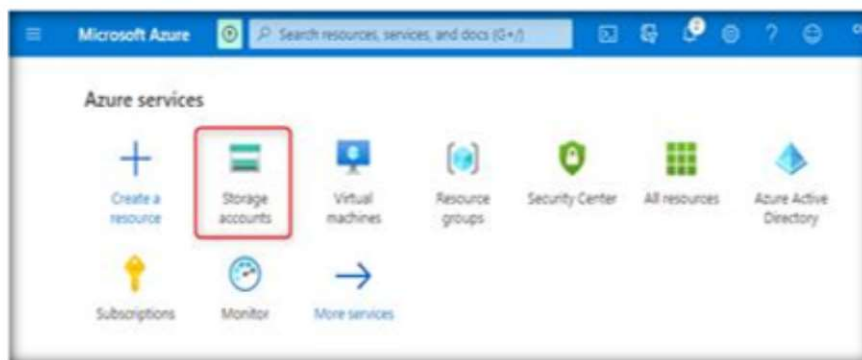


FIGURE 4.7.13: Selecting Storage accounts in Azure portal

14. In the **Storage accounts** window, click on **+Create**.

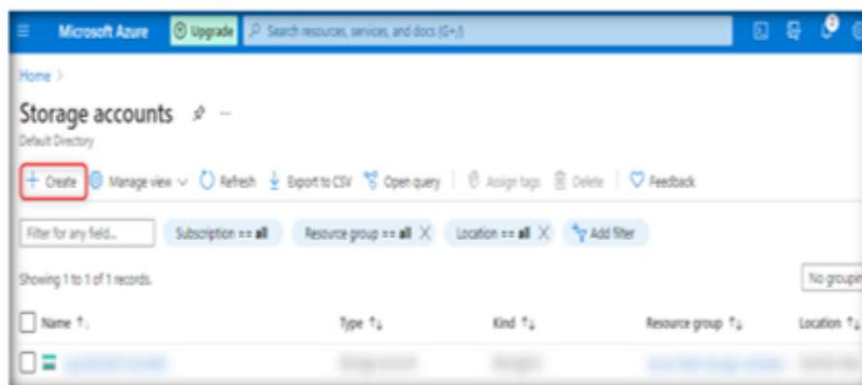


FIGURE 4.7.14: Creating a New Storage Account

15. A **Create a storage account** window will appear now; select the **Resource group** you have created (here, we have selected **SASestRG**).

Note: For this lab, we are keeping all parameters in their default state. You can change them according to your requirements.

The screenshot shows the 'Create a storage account' page in the Microsoft Azure portal. The 'Basics' tab is selected. Under 'Project details', the 'Resource group' dropdown menu is open and highlighted with a red rectangle, showing 'SASestRG' as the selected option. Other fields like 'Subscription' are set to 'Free Trial'. Navigation buttons at the bottom include 'Review + create', '< Previous', and 'Next: Advanced >'.

FIGURE 4.7.15: Entering Resource Group Name

16. Scroll down. Under **Instance details**, type the storage account name (here, we have entered **sasdatastorage**). Leave the **Region**, **Performance** and **Redundancy** fields in their default state. Then, click on the **Next: Advanced>** button.

The screenshot shows the 'Create a storage account' page in the Microsoft Azure portal, scrolled down to the 'Instance details' section. The 'Storage account name' field contains 'sasdatastorage', the 'Region' is '(US) East US', 'Performance' is 'Standard: Recommended for most scenarios (general-purpose v2 account)', and 'Redundancy' is 'Geo-redundant storage (GRS)'. The 'Next: Advanced >' button is highlighted with a red rectangle. The 'Make read access to data available in the event of regional unavailability' checkbox is checked.

FIGURE 4.7.16: Entering Storage account name and Region details

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17. In the **Advanced** tab, leave everything in their default state and click on the **Next: Networking>** button.

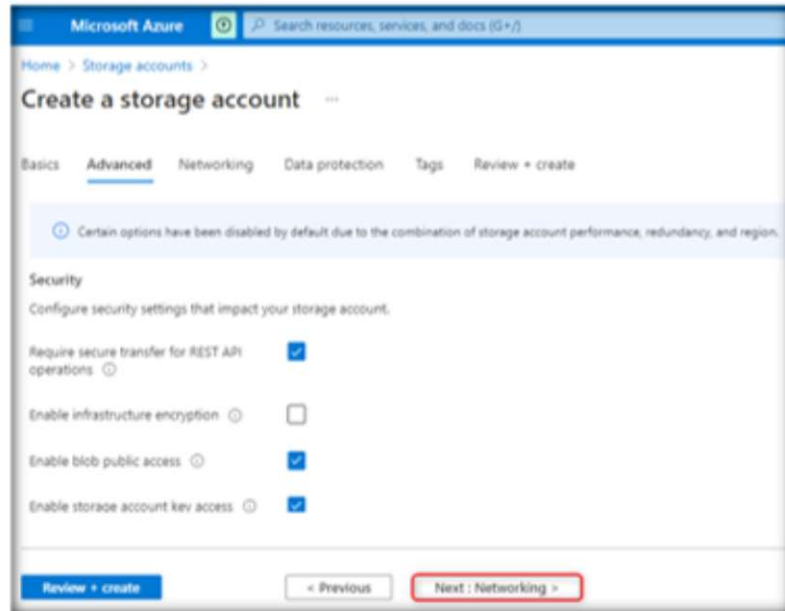


FIGURE 4.7.17: Leaving Everything in Default State in Advanced Tab

18. In the **Networking** tab, leave everything in their default state and click on the **Next: Data protection>** button.

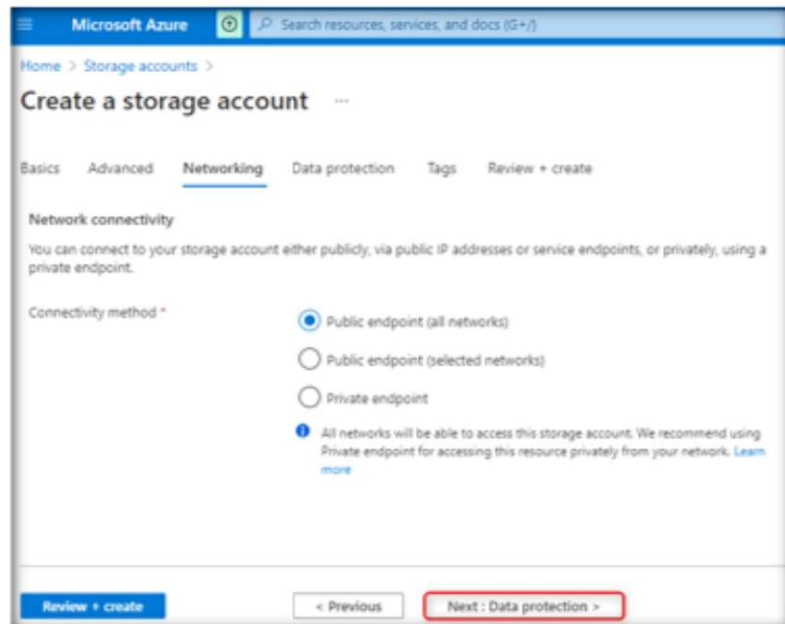


FIGURE 4.7.18: Leaving Everything in Default State in Networking Tab

19. In the **Data protection** tab, leave everything in their default state and click on the **Next: Tags>** button.

The screenshot shows the 'Create a storage account' wizard in the Microsoft Azure portal, specifically the 'Data protection' tab. The breadcrumb navigation shows 'Home > Storage accounts >'. The tabs at the top are 'Basics', 'Advanced', 'Networking', 'Data protection' (which is selected and underlined), 'Tags', and 'Review + create'. Under the 'Recovery' section, there is a heading 'Protect your data from accidental or erroneous deletion or modification.' Below this, there are three options:

- ☐ Enable point-in-time restore for containers. Description: Use point-in-time restore to restore one or more containers to an earlier state. If point-in-time restore is enabled, then versioning, change feed, and blob soft delete must also be enabled. [Learn more](#)
- ☒ Enable soft delete for blobs. Description: Soft delete enables you to recover blobs that were previously marked for deletion, including blobs that were overwritten. [Learn more](#). Below this is a field 'Days to retain deleted blobs' with a dropdown menu set to '7'.
- ☒ Enable soft delete for containers. Description: Soft delete enables you to recover containers that were previously marked for deletion. [Learn more](#)

 At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Review + create' (blue), '< Previous' (grey), and 'Next: Tags >' (red outline).

FIGURE 4.7.19: Leaving Everything in Default State in Data Protection Tab

20. In the **Tags** tab, leave everything in their default state and click on the **Next: Review+ create>** button.

The screenshot shows the 'Create a storage account' wizard in the Microsoft Azure portal, specifically the 'Tags' tab. The breadcrumb navigation shows 'Home > Storage accounts >'. The tabs at the top are 'Basics', 'Advanced', 'Networking', 'Data protection', 'Tags' (which is selected and underlined), and 'Review + create'. Below the tabs, there is a description: 'Tags are name/value pairs that enable you to categorize resources and view consolidated billing by applying the same tag to multiple resources and resource groups. [Learn more about tags](#)'. Below this is another note: 'Note that if you create tags and then change resource settings on other tabs, your tags will be automatically updated.' There is a table with three columns: 'Name', 'Value', and 'Resource'. The 'Name' column has a dropdown menu, the 'Value' column has a text input field, and the 'Resource' column has a dropdown menu currently set to 'All resources selected'. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Review + create' (blue), '< Previous' (grey), and 'Next: Review + create >' (red outline).

FIGURE 4.7.20: Leaving Everything in Default State in Tags Tab

21. After the **Validation passed** message, click on **Create**.

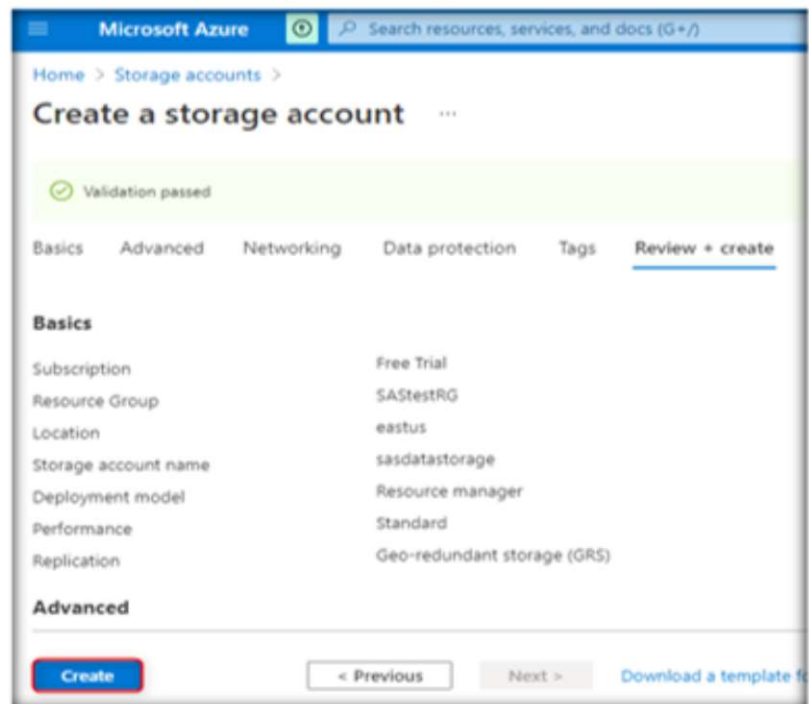


FIGURE 4.7.21: Storage Account Passing the Validation

22. Wait for a few seconds. After the completion of deployment, click on the **Go to resource** button.

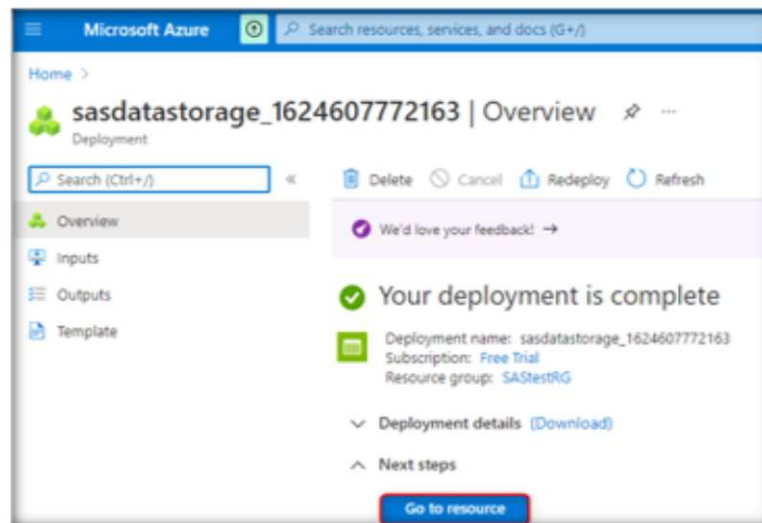


FIGURE 4.7.22: Deployment of Storage Account

23. The storage account is now successfully created.



FIGURE 4.7.23: Successful Creation of New Storage Account

TASK 2

Generating SAS token to Restrict Access to Azure Storage Account

24. Now, to create a container in the storage account, click on **Containers** under **Data storage** in the left pane. Then, click on **+ Container** in the main page. In the **New container** side bar, enter the name of the container (**sascontainer** in this lab) and then click on **Create**.

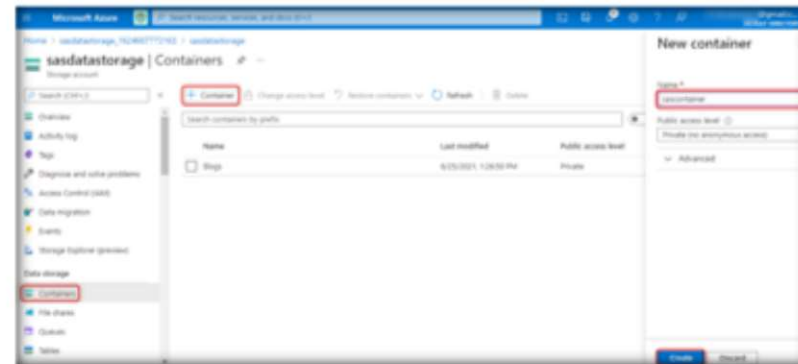


FIGURE 4.7.24: Creating a Container in Storage Account

25. Container **sascontainer** is successfully created now. Click on it.

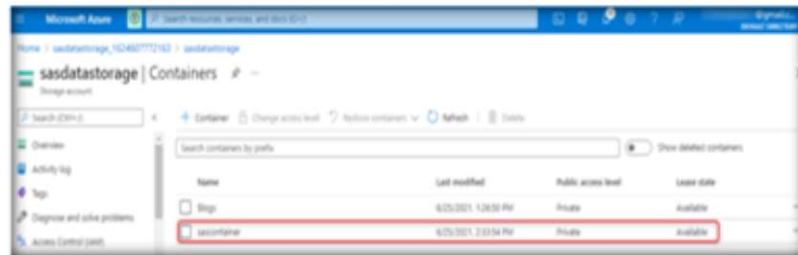


FIGURE 4.7.25: Container is Successfully Created

26. To upload some files into the container, click on **Upload** in the **sascontainer** window.



FIGURE 4.7.26: Selecting the Upload button

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27. In the left pane, an **Upload blob** window will appear. Here, click on the folder icon, browse and select some random files, and then click on the **Upload** button.

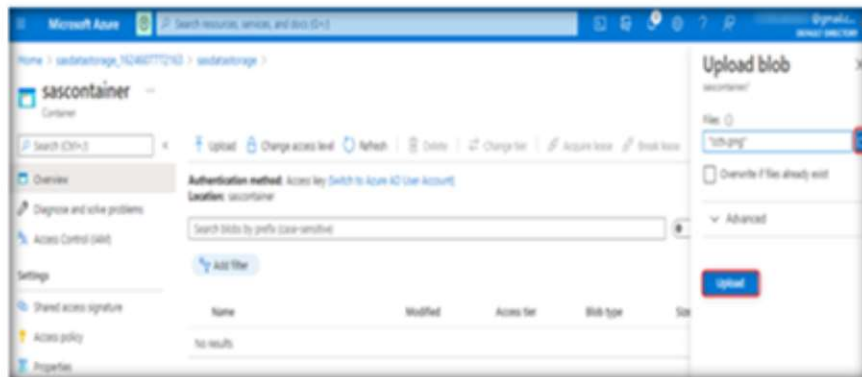


FIGURE 4.7.27: Browsing and Uploading a File

28. The file will be successfully added to the container.

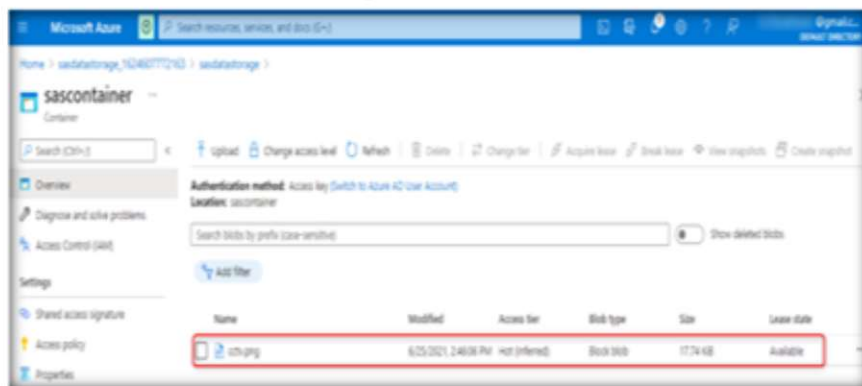


FIGURE 4.7.28: File Successfully Uploaded in the Container

29. Similarly, add another file to the container by repeating **Steps 26–28**.

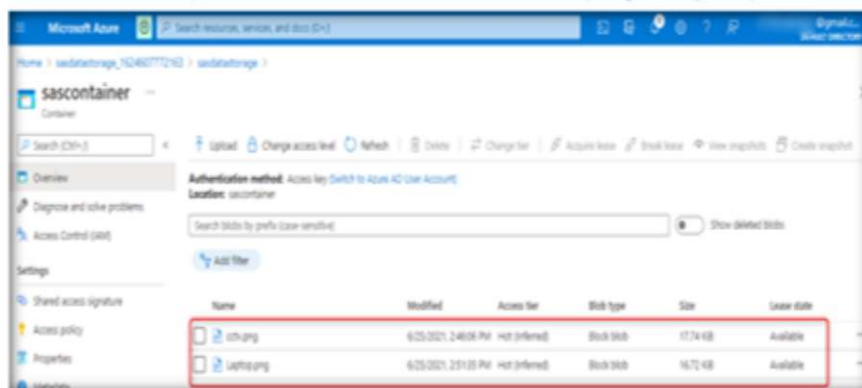


FIGURE 4.7.29: Successfully Uploading Another File in the Container

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30. Now, to generate a SAS token and connection string, go back to the Azure portal and click on **Storage accounts** under **Azure services**.

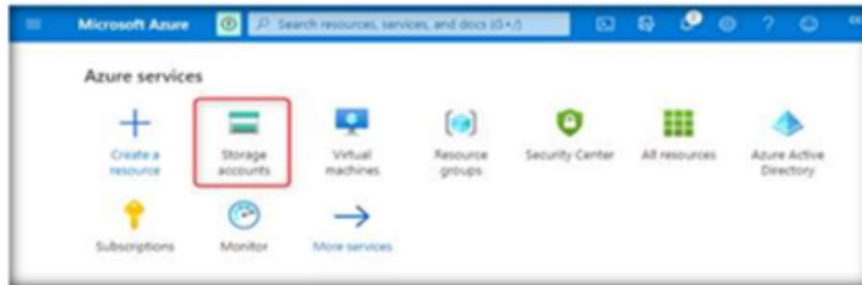


FIGURE 4.7.30: Selecting Storage accounts in Azure Portal

31. A list of storage accounts will be displayed. Select the storage account (**sasdatastorage**) to which you want to generate a shared access signature.

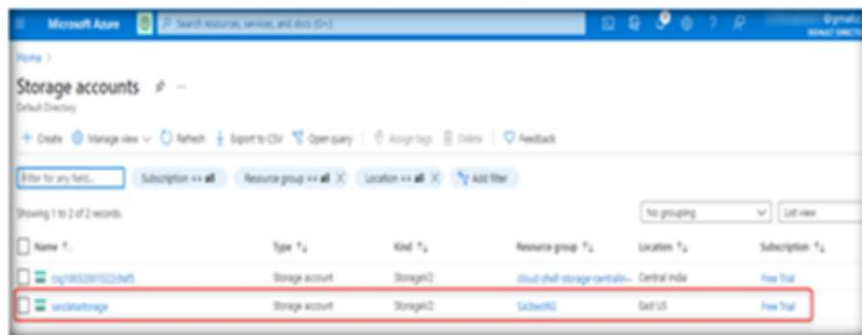


FIGURE 4.7.31: List of Storage Accounts

32. Under **Security + networking** in the left pane, click on **Shared access signature**.

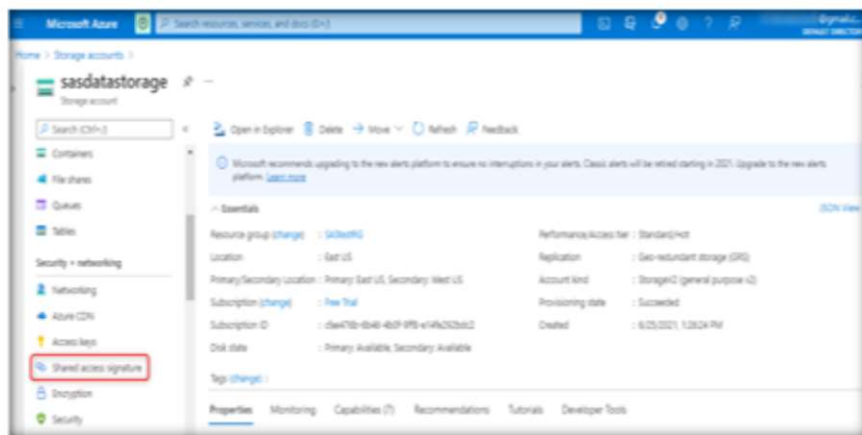


FIGURE 4.7.32: Selecting Shared access signature

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33. Select the **Allowed services** that you want to allow access to (here, we have selected **Blob**). Select **Allowed resource types** as per your requirement (here, we have selected **Service** and **Container**). Select the necessary **Allowed permissions** for the users or clients (here, we have selected **Read** and **List**). Leave **Blob versioning permissions** in its default state.

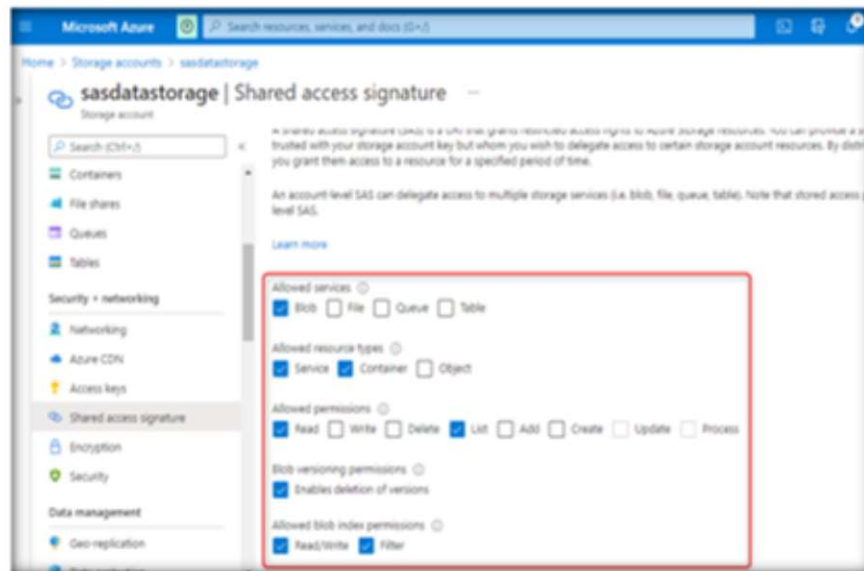


FIGURE 4.7.33: Selecting Allowed Services, Resources, and Permissions for SAS

34. Enter the **Start and expiry date/time** in their respective fields. For **Allowed protocols**, select the **HTTPS only** radio button. Leave **Preferred routing tier** as **Basic (default)**. Then, click on **Generate SAS and connection string** to generate tokens.

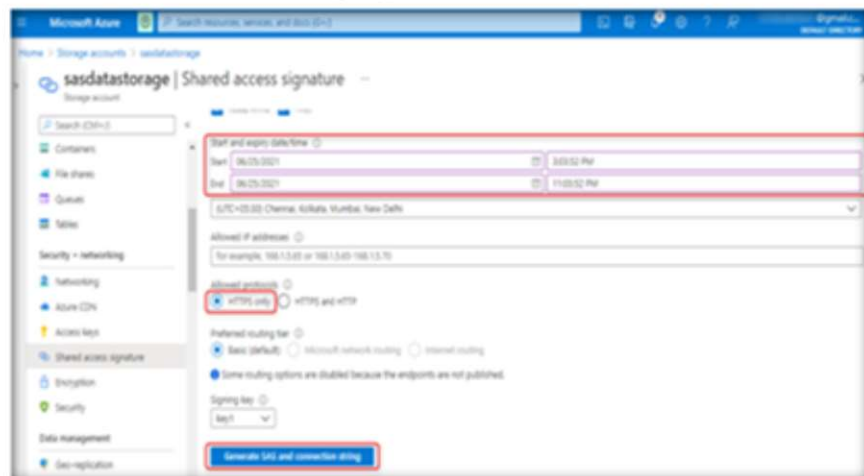


FIGURE 4.7.34: Generating SAS and connection string

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35. The SAS token and connection string will be successfully generated. This will be used by the users or a client to access the storage account.



FIGURE 4.7.35: Successful Generation of SAS URI

36. Open Notepad and copy the **SAS URIs**. Then, save the notepad file on your desktop.



FIGURE 4.7.36: Successful Generation of SAS URI

TASK 3 Installing Azure Storage Explorer

37. A cloud security administrator can use this SAS token to restrict access to Azure storage account.

To use the SAS token, a cloud security engineer needs to install Azure storage explorer on your VM. To install Azure storage explorer, open the Chrome browser and type Google in the address bar. Then, type **Azure Storage Explorer** in the Google search bar.

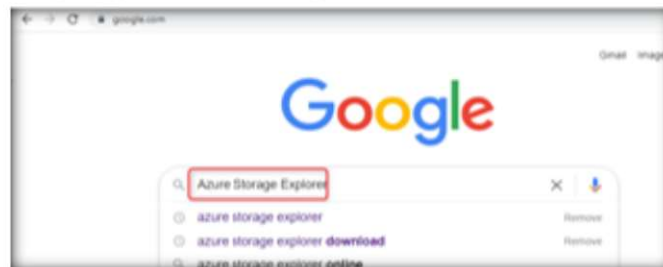


FIGURE 4.7.37: Searching for Azure Storage Explorer in Google

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38. Click on the **Azure Storage Explorer – cloud storage management** link.

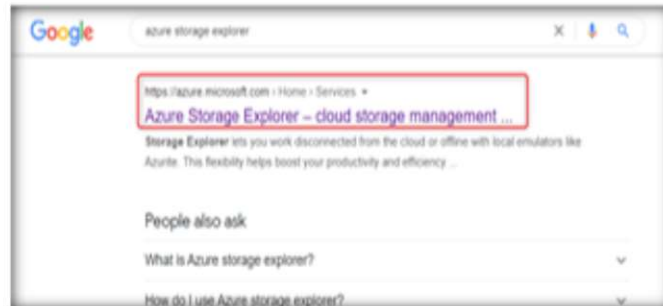


FIGURE 4.7.38: Opening the link of Azure Storage Explorer

39. In the **Operating system** dropdown, select **Windows** and then click on the **Download now** button.

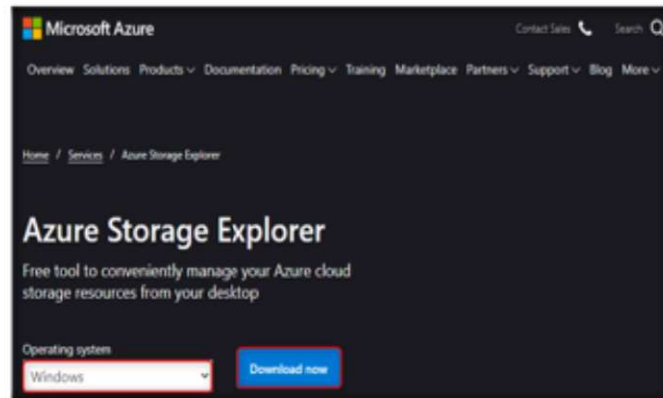


FIGURE 4.7.39: Downloading Azure Storage Explorer Application

40. **StorageExplorer.exe** file will be downloaded now. Run this file by clicking on it.

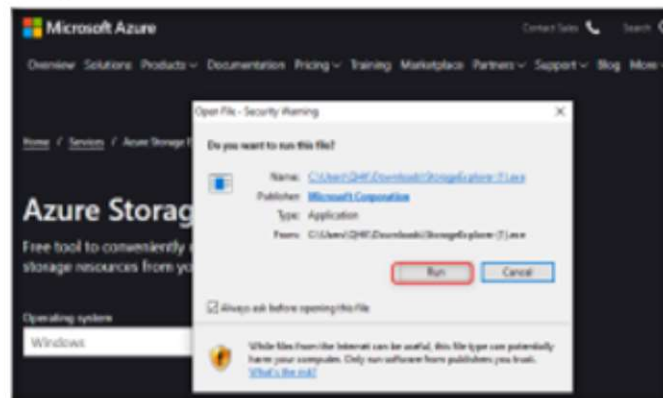


FIGURE 4.7.40: Running Azure Storage Explorer Application

41. A **Select Install Mode** window will now appear. Click on **Install for me only**.



FIGURE 4.7.41: Selecting the Installation Mode

42. A **License Agreement** window will appear now. Select **I accept the agreement** radio button and then click on the **Install** button.

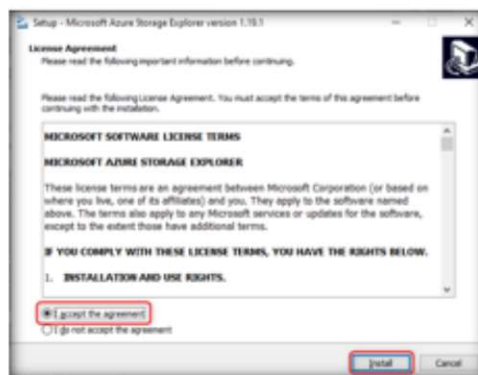


FIGURE 4.7.42: Accepting the License Agreement

43. Select the location where you want to install **Microsoft Azure Storage Explorer** and then click on **Next**.

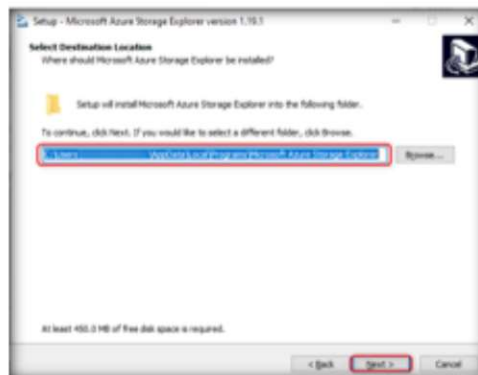


FIGURE 4.7.43: Choosing the location for Azure Storage Explorer

44. A **Select Start Menu Folder** window will appear now. Leave it in its default state and click on **Next**.

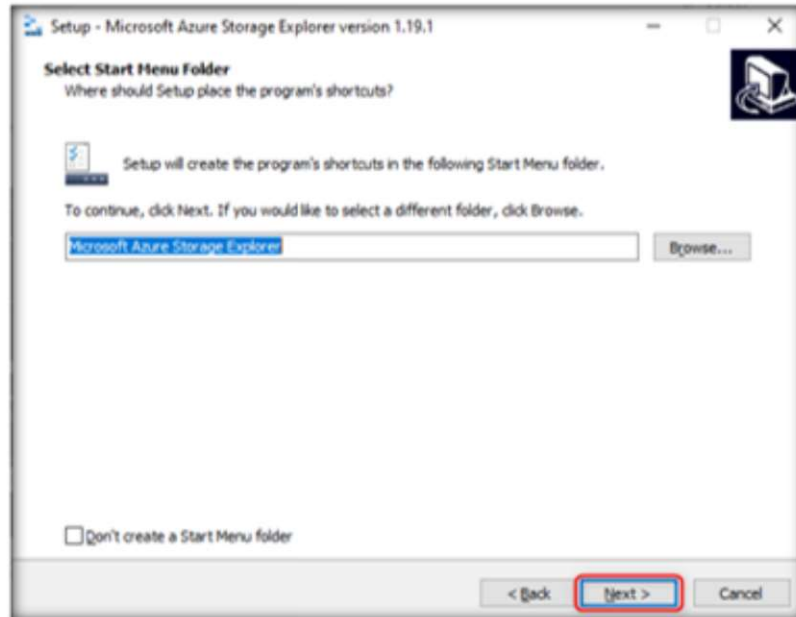


FIGURE 4.7.44: Start Menu Window Selection

45. Wait for a few seconds for the installation to complete.

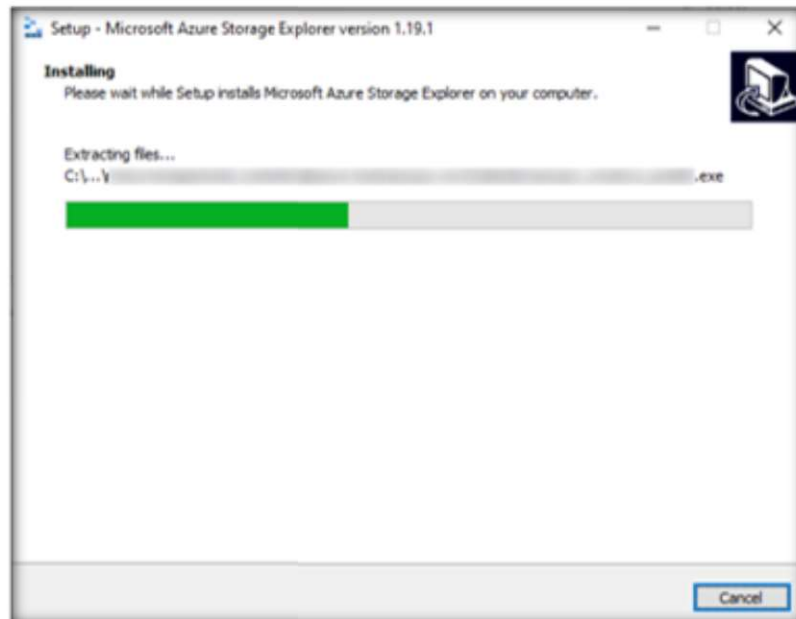


FIGURE 4.7.45: Progress of Azure Storage Explorer Installation

46. A **Completing the Microsoft Azure Storage Explorer Setup Wizard** window will appear now. Check the **Launch Microsoft Azure Storage Explorer** option and then click on **Finish**.

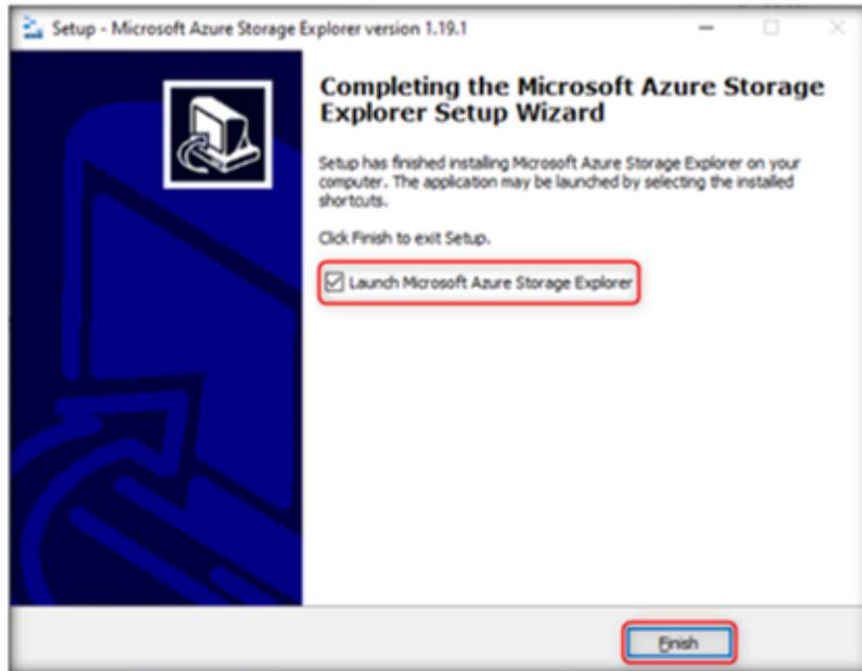


FIGURE 4.7.46: Azure Storage Explorer Installation Completion

47. **Microsoft Azure Storage Explorer** will be launched in a few seconds.

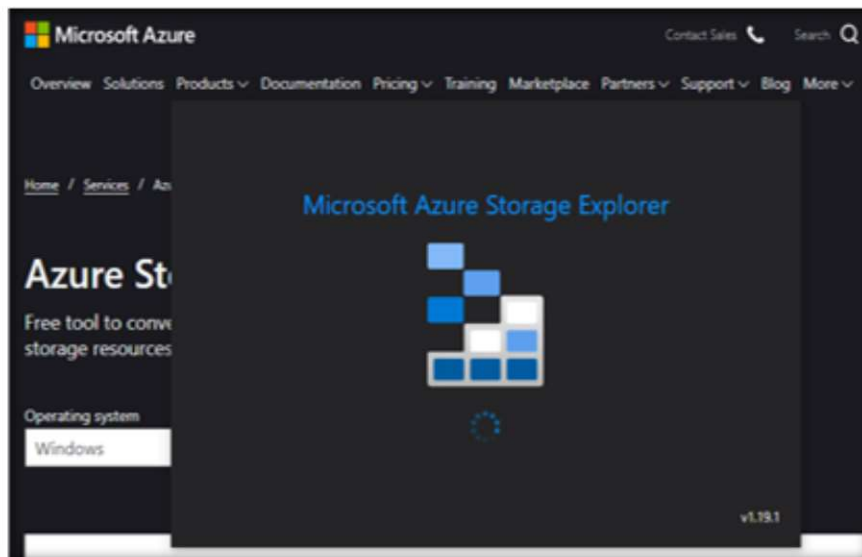


FIGURE 4.7.47: Launching of Azure Storage Explorer

48. Azure Storage Explorer application dashboard will be displayed now.



FIGURE 4.7.48: Dashboard of Azure Storage Explorer

TASK 4

Restricting Access to the Azure storage account using the SAS URI

49. A security administrator can allow access to clients or users with a SAS token for the storage account. A client or user without a SAS token or with an expired SAS token cannot access the storage account. Thus, a security administrator can regulate the activities on a storage account with a SAS token.

In the **Microsoft Azure Storage Explorer** dashboard, click on the **Manage Account** icon and then click on **Add an account...**

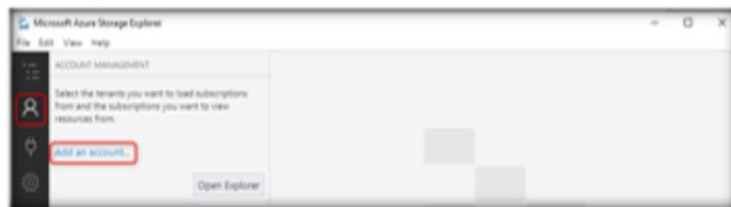


FIGURE 4.7.49: Adding Storage Account in Azure Storage Explorer

50. In the **Select Resource** window that appears, navigate and click on **Storage account or service**.

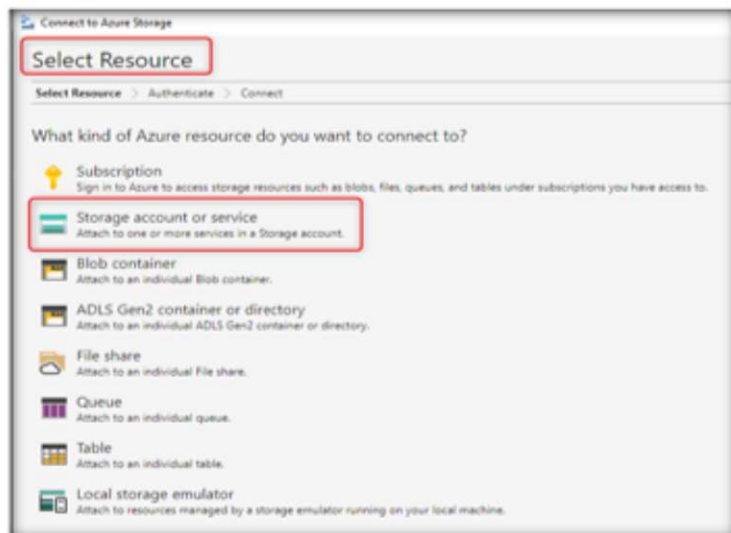


FIGURE 4.7.50: Selecting Storage Account or Service in Azure Storage Explorer

51. The **Select Connection Method** window will appear now. Select **Shared access signature URL (SAS)** and then click on **Next**.

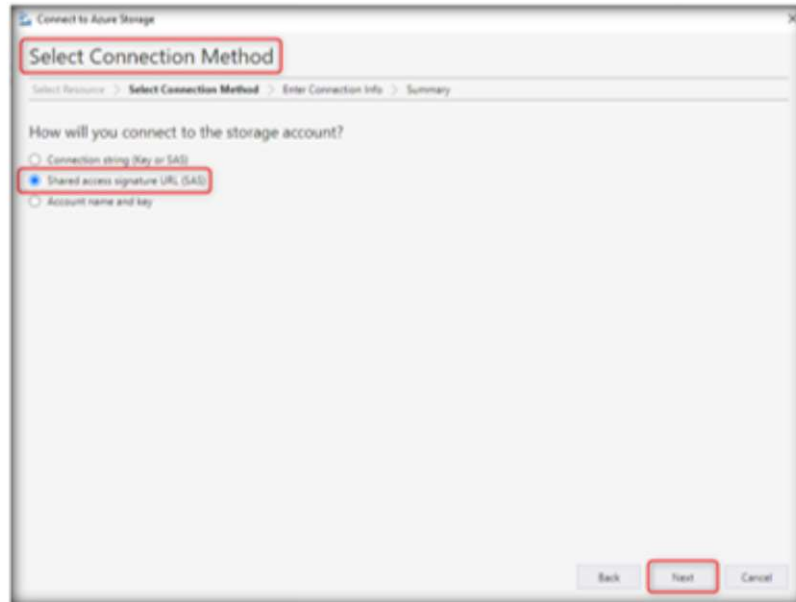


FIGURE 4.7.51: Selecting the radio button of Shared access signature URL.

52. The **Enter Connection info** window will appear now. In the **Service URL** box, paste the **SAS URL** that was copied in **Step 30** and click on the **Next** button.

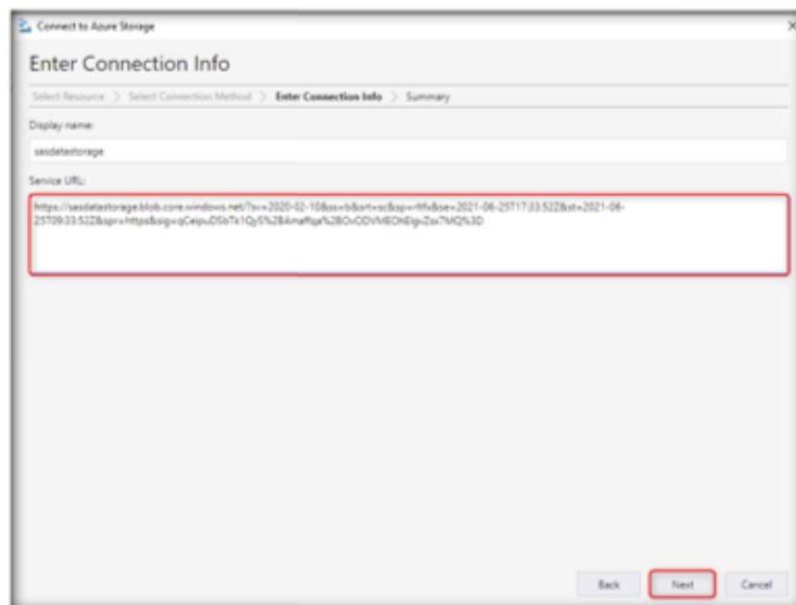


FIGURE 4.7.52: Pasting the SAS URL.

53. In the **Summary** window that appears, click on the **Connect** button.

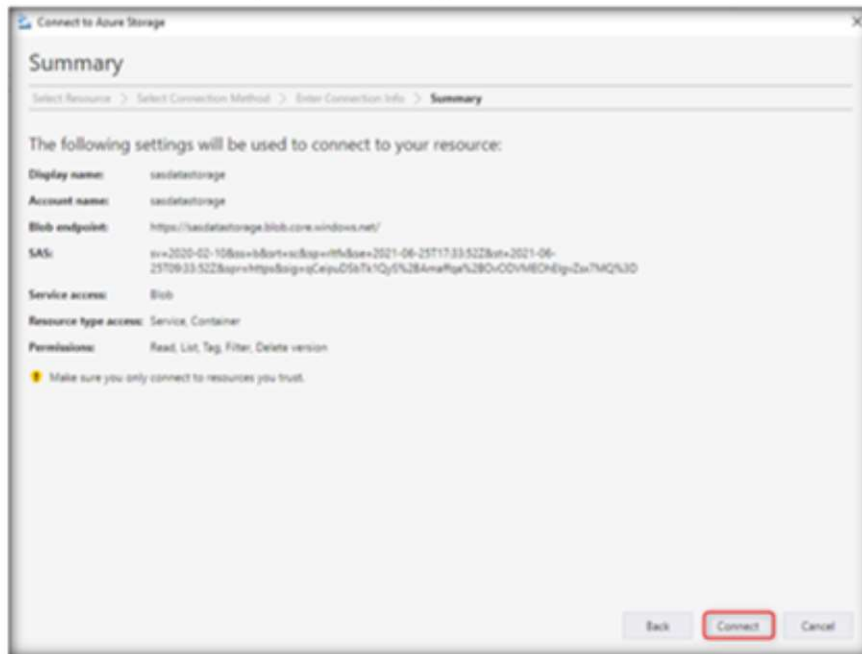


FIGURE 4.7.53: Connecting with Azure Storage Account

54. The new connection will be added successfully to the storage account.

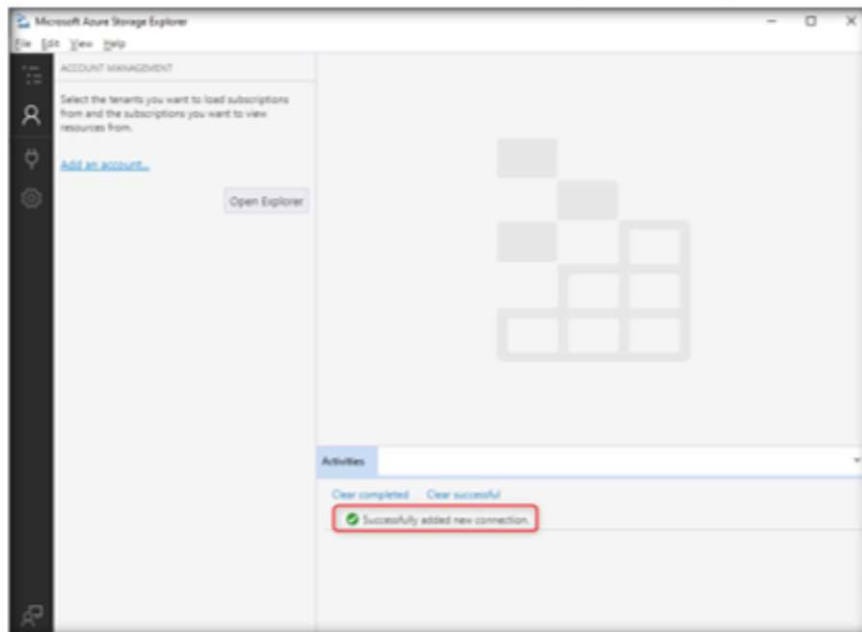


FIGURE 4.7.54: Successfully Establishing the Connection with Azure Storage Account

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55. Click on **Microsoft Azure Storage Explorer**, navigate and expand **Storage Accounts** and then the **sasdatastorage (SAS)** account, and finally click on the **sascontainer** container. You will observe the files present in the container.

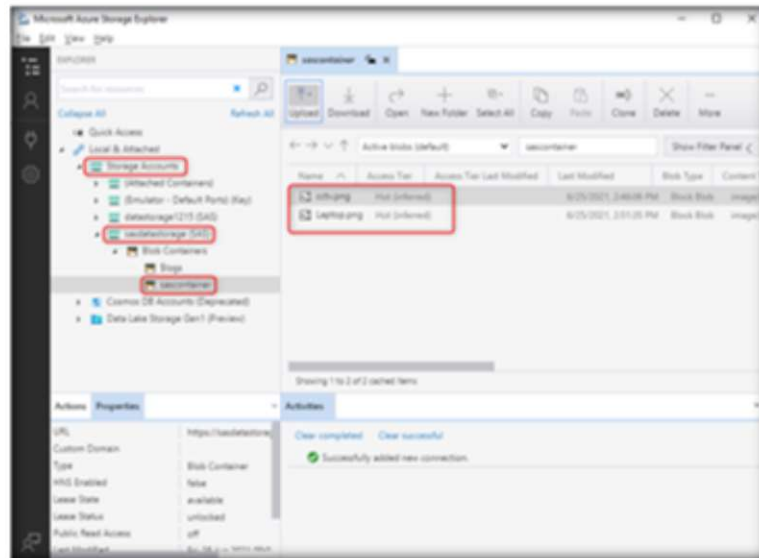


FIGURE 4.7.55: Checking the Container of Azure Storage Account in Azure Storage Explorer

56. The client or the user is allowed to read and list the content of the storage account. They are not allowed to delete or upload any content on the storage account. Now, if you try to download the file, it will be downloaded.

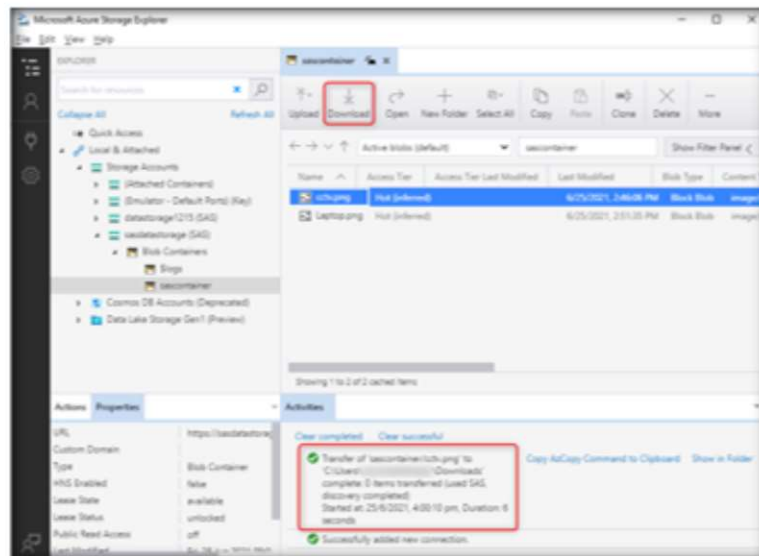


FIGURE 4.7.56: Downloading File from the Container of Azure Storage Account

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57. Click on **Delete** at the top right corner. The client or user will not be able to delete the file as the delete permission has not been given to them.

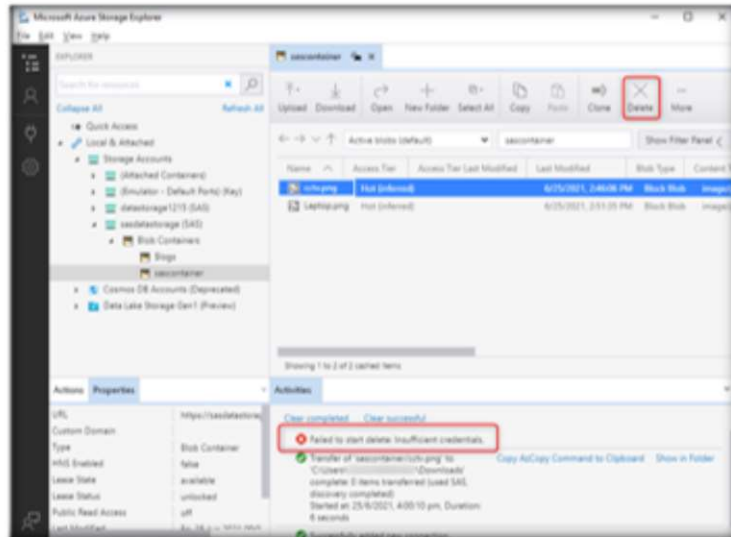


FIGURE 4.7.57: Failed to Delete File from the Container of Azure Storage Account

58. This way, a cloud security administrator can stringently regulate the access to a storage account. Based on the requirements, an administrator can give or restrict access to users or clients through shared access signature.

Caution: Ensure you delete, shut down, or terminate all resources created and used in this lab to prevent their billing.

59. Navigate to **Storage accounts** in Azure Portal. Click on the name of the storage account (**sasdatastorage**) to open the **Overview** window. Click on **Delete** at the top. Type the storage account name in the **Delete storage account** window and click on **Delete**.

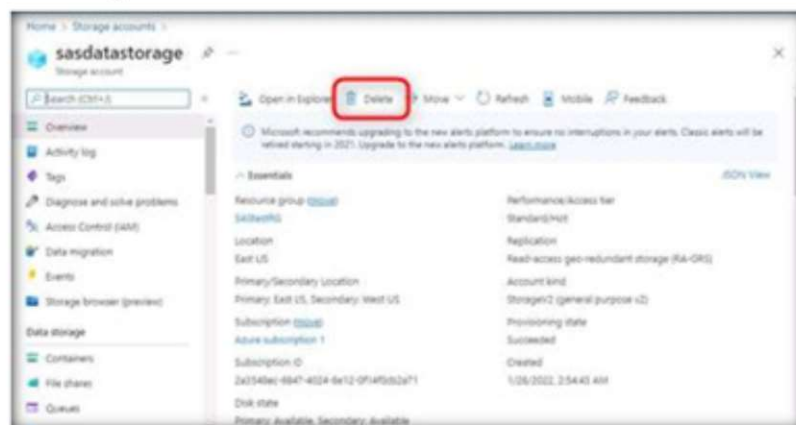


FIGURE 4.7.58: Deleting Storage Account

60. Navigate to **Resource groups** in the Azure portal. Click on the name of the resource group (**SastestRG**) to open the **Overview** window. Click on **Delete resource group**. In the **Delete resource group** window, type the name of the resource group and click on **Delete**.

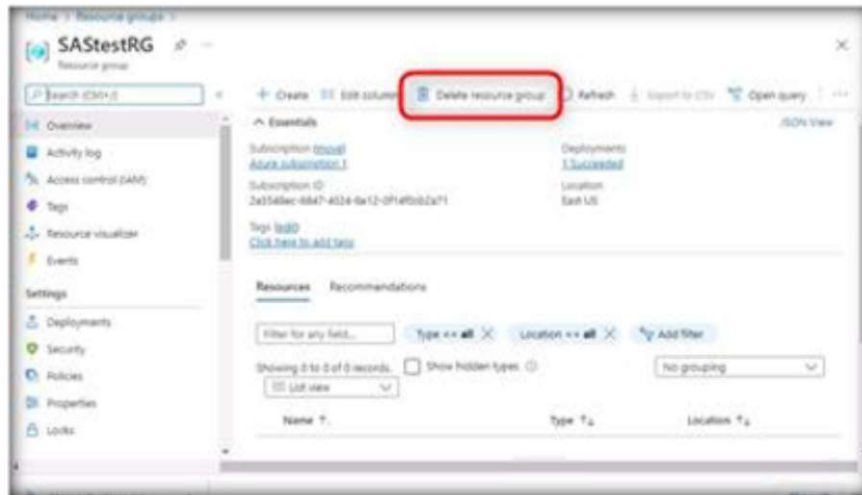


FIGURE 4.7.57: Deleting Resource Group

Lab Analysis

Analyze and document the results of this lab exercise. Provide your opinion on your target's security posture and exposure through free public information.

PLEASE TALK TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS LAB.