Deploying an Application to Amazon EKS using GitHub Actions CI/CD

Overview

This guide walks through the end-to-end process of deploying a cloud-native application on **Amazon EKS (Elastic Kubernetes Service)** using **GitHub Actions CI/CD**. By following these steps, you can automate deployments, ensuring a streamlined DevOps workflow.

Prerequisites

Before you begin, ensure the following tools are installed on your local machine:

Install Terraform, AWS CLI, and Kubectl

Run the following commands to set up your environment:

Update and upgrade system packages

sudo apt update && sudo apt upgrade -y

Install necessary dependencies

sudo apt install -y gnupg software-properties-common curl unzip

Install Terraform

curl -fsSL https://apt.releases.hashicorp.com/gpg | sudo gpg --dearmor -o /usr/share/keyrings/hashicorp-archive-keyring.gpg

echo "deb [signed-by=/usr/share/keyrings/hashicorp-archive-keyring.gpg] https://apt.releases.hashicorp.com $(lsb_release -cs) main" | sudo tee /etc/apt/sources.list.d/hashicorp.list

sudo apt update && sudo apt install -y terraform

Install AWS CLI

curl "https://awscli.amazonaws.com/awscli-exe-linux-x86_64.zip" -o "awscliv2.zip"

unzip awscliv2.zip

sudo ./aws/install

Install kubectl

curl -LO "https://dl.k8s.io/release/$(curl -L -s https://dl.k8s.io/release/stable.txt)/bin/linux/amd64/kubectl"

sudo chmod +x kubectl

sudo mv kubectl /usr/local/bin/

sudo kubectl version --client

Verify the installations:

terraform version

aws --version

kubectl version --client

AWS Configuration

Configure AWS credentials using:

aws configure

Setting Up the GitHub Repository

Fork Your Repository (Recommended)

1. Go to the repository: github.com/sandeepkalathil/githubactions-eks.
2. Click the "Fork" button in the top-right corner.
3. Clone the forked repository:

git clone https://github.com/<your-github-username>/githubactions-eks.git

cd githubactions-eks

Alternative: Clone and Push to a New Repo

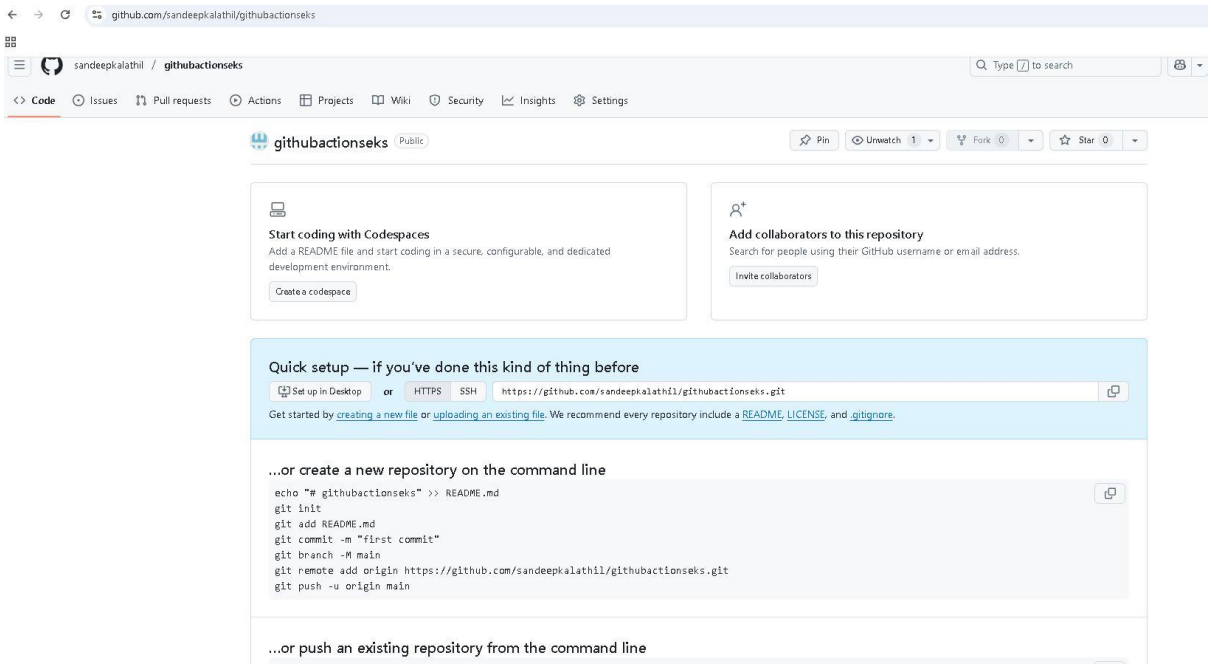
git clone https://github.com/sandeepkalathil/githubactions-eks.git

cd githubactions-eks

Remove the original remote repository

git remote remove origin

Create a new GitHub repository and set it as the origin



git remote add origin https://github.com/<your-username>/new-repo.git

Generate a New GitHub Token

1. **Go to GitHub → Developer Settings → Personal Access Tokens.**
2. **Click "Generate new token (classic)" and select these scopes:**
   - ✅ **repo → Full repository access**
   - ✅ **workflow → Allows updating workflows**

3. **Copy and store the token securely.**

Push Your Code to GitHub

git remote set-url origin https://USERNAME:TOKEN@github.com/USERNAME/REPO.git

example: git remote set-url origin https://sandeepkalathil:ghp_YourTokenHere@github.com/sandeepkalathil/githubactionseks.git

git push -u origin main

Remove the repo folder that was cloned

rm -rf githubactions-eks/

Now to work on your new Repo Clone your github repo

git clone https://github.com/sandeepkalathil/githubactionseks.git

Deploying Infrastructure with Terraform

cd githubactionseks/

cd terraform/

terraform init

terraform plan

terraform apply

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~$ cd githubactionseks/
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks$ cd terraform
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform$ terraform init
Initializing the backend...
Initializing modules...
Downloading registry.terraform.io/terraform-aws-modules/eks/aws 19.21.0 for eks...
- eks in .terraform/modules/eks
- eks.eks_managed_node_group in .terraform/modules/eks/modules/eks-managed-node-group
- eks.eks_managed_node_group.user_data in .terraform/modules/eks/modules/_user_data
- eks.fargate_profile in .terraform/modules/eks/modules/fargate-profile
Downloading registry.terraform.io/terraform-aws-modules/kms/aws 2.1.0 for eks.kms...
- eks.kms in .terraform/modules/eks.kms
- eks.self_managed_node_group in .terraform/modules/eks/modules/self-managed-node-group
- eks.self_managed_node_group.user_data in .terraform/modules/eks/modules/_user_data
Downloading registry.terraform.io/terraform-aws-modules/vpc/aws 5.19.0 for vpc...
- vpc in .terraform/modules/vpc
Initializing provider plugins...
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/tls from the dependency lock file
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/kubernetes from the dependency lock file
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/cloudinit from the dependency lock file
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/aws from the dependency lock file
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/time from the dependency lock file
- Installing hashicorp/time v0.13.0...
- Installed hashicorp/time v0.13.0 (signed by HashiCorp)
- Installing hashicorp/tls v4.0.6...
- Installed hashicorp/tls v4.0.6 (signed by HashiCorp)
- Installing hashicorp/kubernetes v2.36.0...
- Installed hashicorp/kubernetes v2.36.0 (signed by HashiCorp)
- Installing hashicorp/cloudinit v2.3.6...
- Installed hashicorp/cloudinit v2.3.6 (signed by HashiCorp)
- Installing hashicorp/aws v5.92.0...
- Installed hashicorp/aws v5.92.0 (signed by HashiCorp)
Terraform has made some changes to the provider dependency selections recorded
in the .terraform.lock.hcl file. Review those changes and commit them to your
version control system if they represent changes you intended to make.

Terraform has been successfully initialized!

You may now begin working with Terraform. Try running "terraform plan" to see
any changes that are required for your infrastructure. All Terraform commands
should now work.

If you ever set or change modules or backend configuration for Terraform,
rerun this command to reinitialize your working directory. If you forget, other
commands will detect it and remind you to do so if necessary.
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform$
```

```
Plan: 78 to add, 0 to change, 1 to destroy.

Changes to Outputs:
  ~ ecr_repository_url                        = "794038256791.dkr.ecr.eu-north-1.amazonaws.com/freshfarm-repo" -> (known after apply)
  ~ eks_cluster_certificate_authority_data = "LS0tLS1CRUdJTiBDRVJUSUZJQ0FURS0tLS0tCk1JSURCVENDQWUy [illegible]
wM0FXams5Ci0tLS0tRU5EIENFUlRJRklDQVRFLS0tLS0K" -> (known after apply)
  ~ eks_cluster_endpoint                      = "https://3C83B40614911694BBB50D8BB38CA498.gr7.eu-north-1.eks.amazonaws.com" -> (known after apply)
  + eks_cluster_id                            = (known after apply)
  ~ eks_cluster_security_group_id             = "sg-0bae8ae25506710e7" -> (known after apply)
  ~ github_actions_role_arn                   = "arn:aws:iam::794038256791:role/GitHubActionsECRRole" -> (known after apply)
  ~ private_subnets                           = [
      ~ "subnet-048b3603755a24d48" -> (known after apply),
      ~ "subnet-09c45d6f13451601d" -> (known after apply),
      ~ "subnet-08516d78429178978" -> (known after apply),
    ]
  ~ public_subnets                            = [
      ~ "subnet-09e51d6eea6f0b0db" -> (known after apply),
      ~ "subnet-0c464ac15c90d5434" -> (known after apply),
      ~ "subnet-0290dc41c54326c67" -> (known after apply),
    ]
  ~ vpc_id                                    = "vpc-08854aa062e00231f" -> (known after apply)

Note: You didn't use the -out option to save this plan, so Terraform can't guarantee to take exactly these actions if you run "terraform apply" now.
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform$ terraform apply
```

Save the Terraform output as you will need the generated values later.

Setting Up Ingress for External Access

Navigate to terraform-ingress/nginx-ingress.yaml and update:

- host
- cluster_ca_certificate (from Terraform output)

Run the following commands to deploy Nginx Ingress:

terraform init
terraform plan
terraform apply

Session ID: sandeep-qpt7otqhc2fuchuh2b58euxlei Instance ID: i-000ff110c755c4c1b

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform$ cd ../terraform-ingress/
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform-ingress$ vi nginx-ingress.tf
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform-ingress$ terraform init
Initializing the backend...
Initializing provider plugins...
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/aws from the dependency lock file
- Reusing previous version of hashicorp/helm from the dependency lock file
- Installing hashicorp/aws v5.92.0...
- Installed hashicorp/aws v5.92.0 (signed by HashiCorp)
- Installing hashicorp/helm v2.17.0...
- Installed hashicorp/helm v2.17.0 (signed by HashiCorp)

Terraform has been successfully initialized!

You may now begin working with Terraform. Try running "terraform plan" to see
any changes that are required for your infrastructure. All Terraform commands
should now work.

If you ever set or change modules or backend configuration for Terraform,
rerun this command to reinitialize your working directory. If you forget, other
commands will detect it and remind you to do so if necessary.
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform-ingress$ terraform plan
```

```
Terraform will perform the following actions:

  # helm_release.nginx_ingress will be created
  + resource "helm_release" "nginx_ingress" {
      + atomic                     = false
      + chart                      = "ingress-nginx"
      + cleanup_on_fail            = false
      + create_namespace           = true
      + dependency_update          = false
      + disable_crd_hooks          = false
      + disable_openapi_validation = false
      + disable_webhooks           = false
      + force_update               = false
      + id                         = (known after apply)
      + lint                       = false
      + manifest                   = (known after apply)
      + max_history                = 0
      + metadata                   = (known after apply)
      + name                       = "nginx-ingress"
      + namespace                  = "ingress-nginx"
      + pass_credentials           = false
      + recreate_pods              = false
      + render_subchart_notes      = true
      + replace                    = false
      + repository                 = "https://kubernetes.github.io/ingress-nginx"
      + reset_values               = false
      + reuse_values               = false
      + skip_crds                  = false
      + status                     = "deployed"
      + timeout                    = 300
      + verify                     = false
      + version                    = "4.12.0"
      + wait                       = true
      + wait_for_jobs              = false

      + set {
          + name  = "controller.service.type"
          + value = "LoadBalancer"
          # (1 unchanged attribute hidden)
        }
    }

Plan: 1 to add, 0 to change, 0 to destroy.

Note: You didn't use the -out option to save this plan, so Terraform can't guarantee to take exactly these actions if you run "terraform apply" now.
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform-ingress$ terraform apply
```

```
Plan: 1 to add, 0 to change, 0 to destroy.

Do you want to perform these actions?
  Terraform will perform the actions described above.
  Only 'yes' will be accepted to approve.

  Enter a value: yes

helm_release.nginx_ingress: Creating...
helm_release.nginx_ingress: Still creating... [10s elapsed]
helm_release.nginx_ingress: Still creating... [20s elapsed]
helm_release.nginx_ingress: Still creating... [30s elapsed]
helm_release.nginx_ingress: Creation complete after 36s [id=nginx-ingress]

Apply complete! Resources: 1 added, 0 changed, 0 destroyed.
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~/githubactionseks/terraform-ingress$
```

Adding Secrets to GitHub Actions

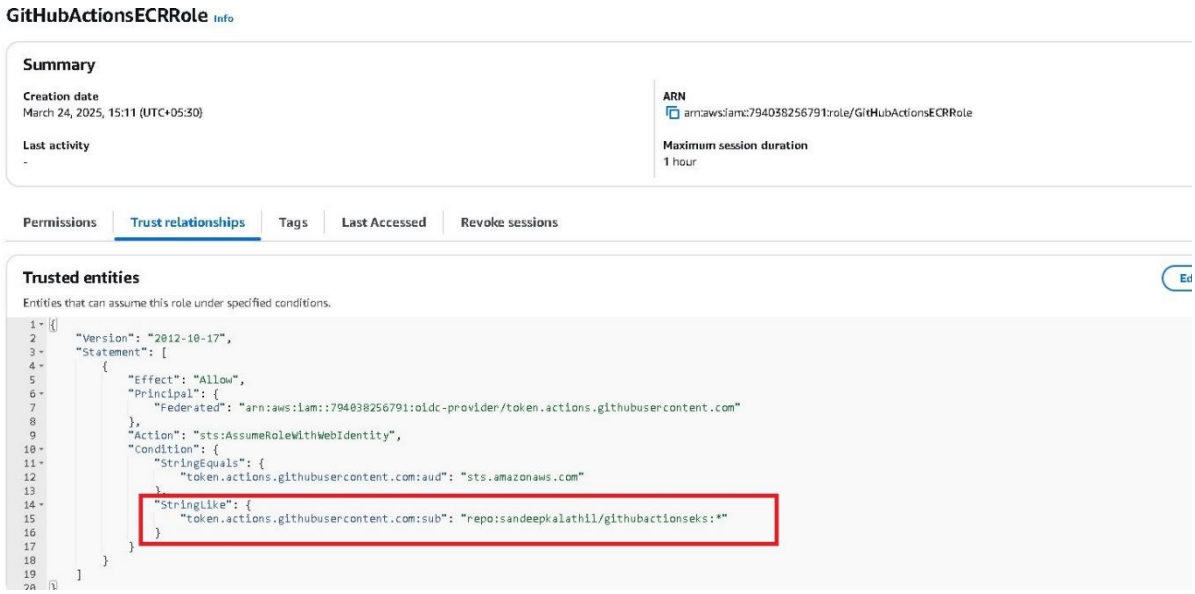
Once the resources are created you have to add secret values to your repository settings.

Go to **GitHub → Repository Settings → Secrets and Variables → Actions**

Name	Value
AWS_REGION	eu-north-1
AWS_ROLE_ARN	arn:aws:iam::794038256791:role/GitHubActionsECRRole
ECR_REPOSITORY	freshfarm-repo
EKS_CLUSTER_NAME	Freshfarm-cluster

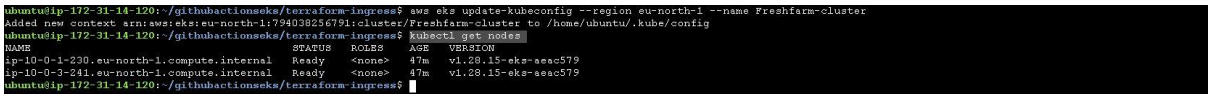
Update IAM Role Trust Policy

Go to **AWS IAM → Roles → GitHubActionsECRRole** and update the trust policy to include your GitHub repository.



Running the Deployment Workflow

aws eks update-kubeconfig --region eu-north-1 --name Freshfarm-cluster
kubectl get nodes



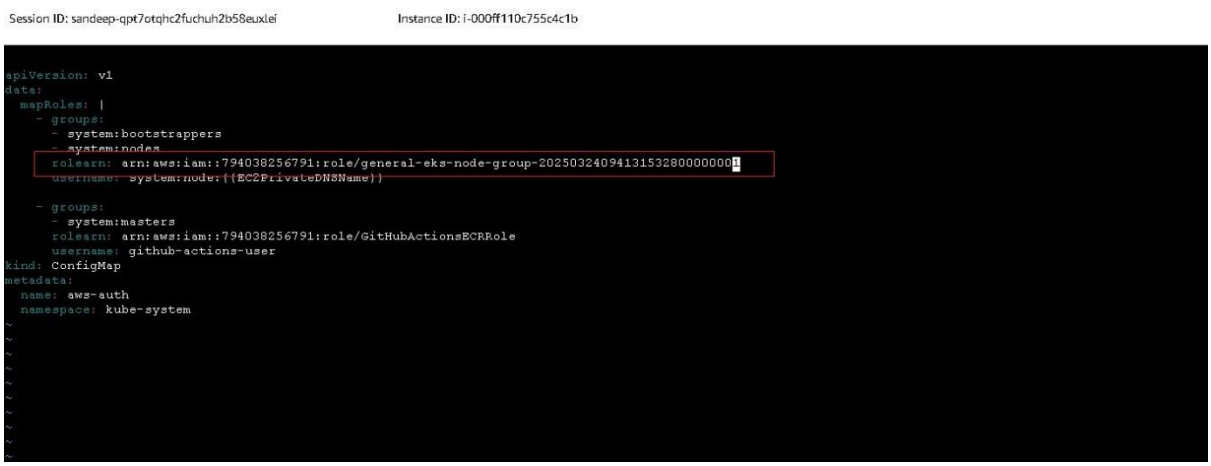
Manually Map IAM Role to Kubernetes RBAC

Check the current AWS authentication config:

kubectl get configmap aws-auth -n kube-system -o yaml

The role is missing. You will need to update the config file (already in the repo with name “aws-auth.yaml” to add the role **GitHubActionsECRRole**

You will need to update the role arn of the role “general-eks-node-group-20250324094131532800000001” as it could be different in the file “aws-auth.yaml”



Apply it using

kubectl apply -f aws-auth.yaml

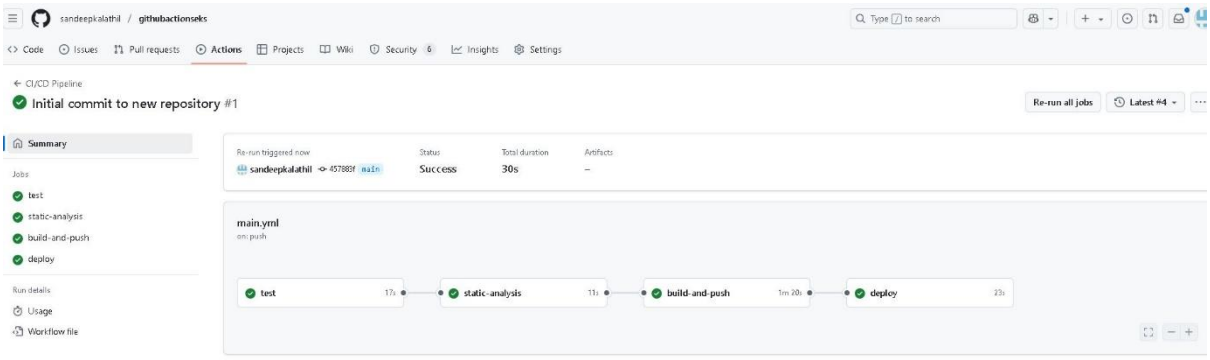
Verify using the command

kubectl get configmap aws-auth -n kube-system -o yaml

Running GitHub Actions CI/CD

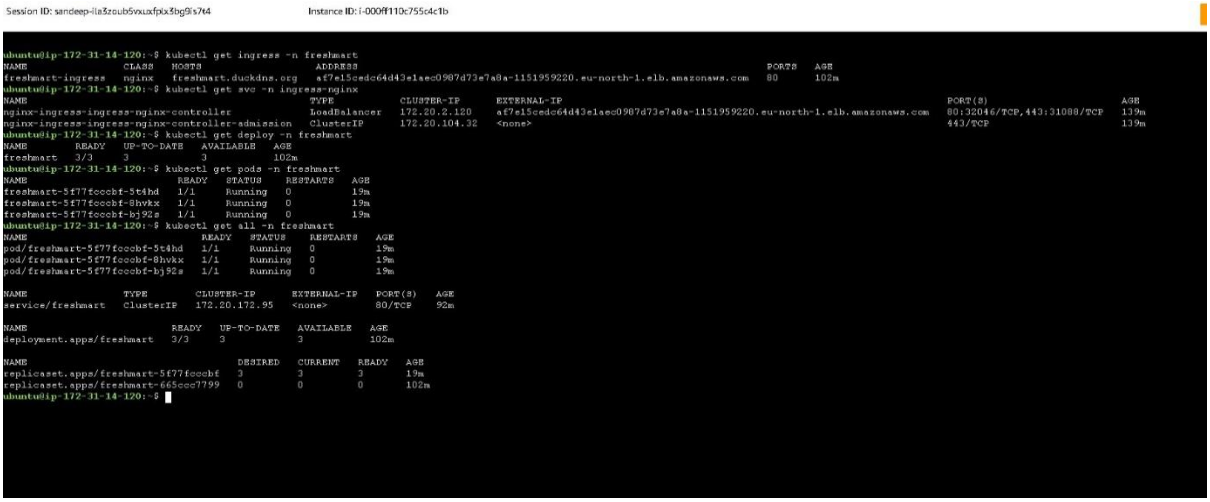
Once everything is set up, **trigger the GitHub Actions workflow** to deploy the application. The workflow will:

1. **Build & Push Docker Image** to Amazon ECR.
2. **Deploy Application to EKS**.
3. **Apply Kubernetes Service & Ingress**.



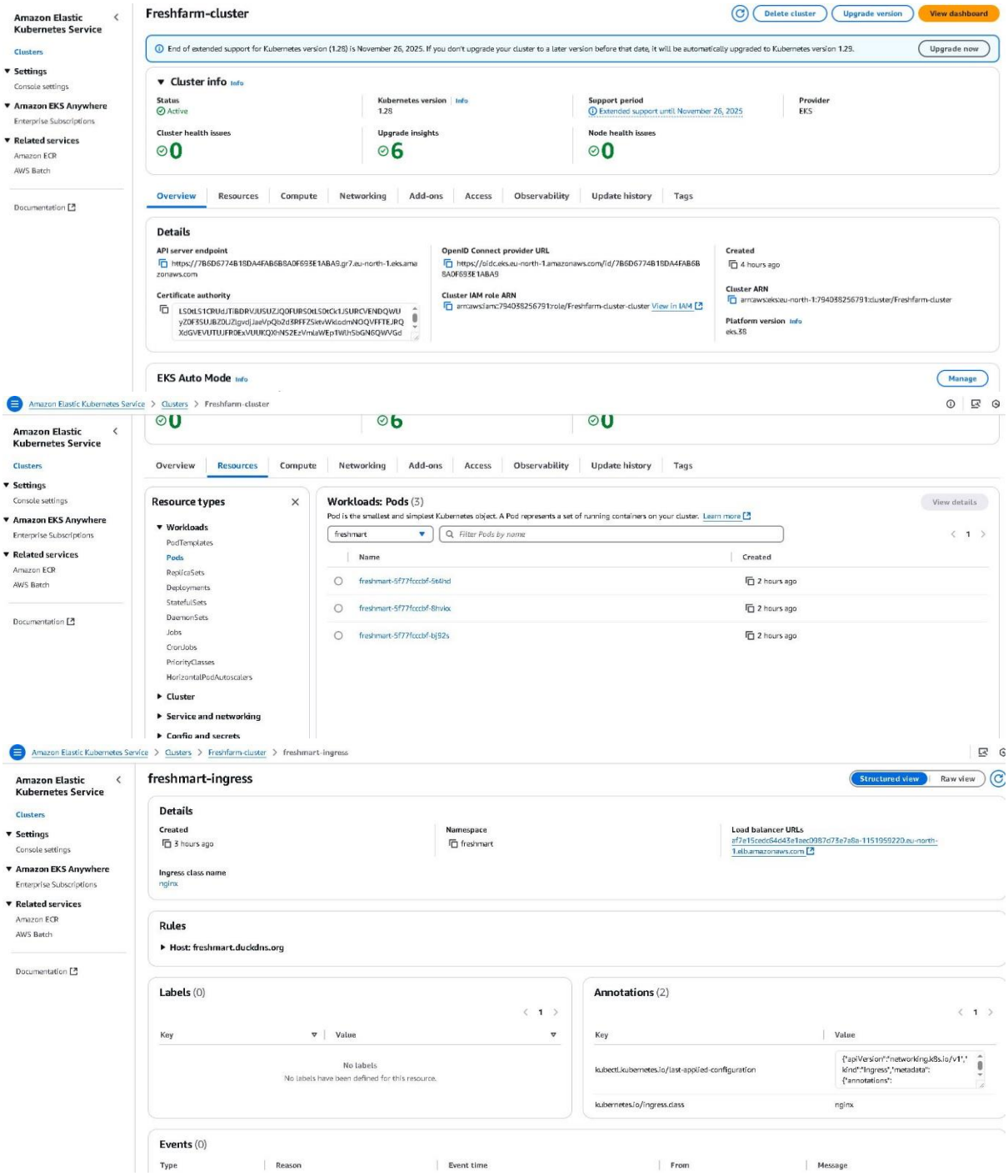
Verify the Deployment

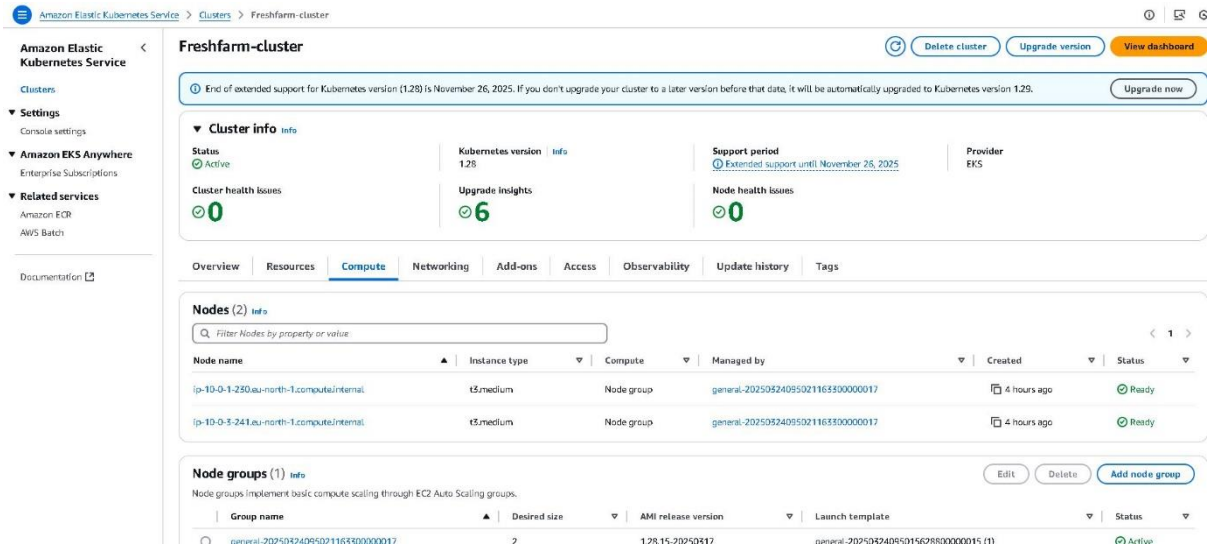
kubectl get ingress -n freshmart
kubectl get svc -n ingress-nginx
kubectl get deploy -n freshmart
kubectl get pods -n freshmart
kubectl get all -n freshmart



Session ID: sandeep-ila3zoub5vxuxfplx3bg9is7t4 Instance ID: i-000ff110c755c4c1b

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~$ curl -v http://freshmart.duckdns.org
* Host freshmart.duckdns.org:80 was resolved.
* IPv6: (none)
* IPv4: 16.170.53.188
*   Trying 16.170.53.188:80...
* Connected to freshmart.duckdns.org (16.170.53.188) port 80
> GET / HTTP/1.1
> Host: freshmart.duckdns.org
> User-Agent: curl/8.5.0
> Accept: */*
>
< HTTP/1.1 200 OK
< Date: Mon, 24 Mar 2025 12:40:24 GMT
< Content-Type: text/html
< Content-Length: 464
< Connection: keep-alive
< Last-Modified: Mon, 24 Mar 2025 12:18:15 GMT
< ETag: "67e14d87-1d0"
< Accept-Ranges: bytes
<
<!doctype html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="UTF-8" />
    <link rel="icon" type="image/svg+xml" href="/vite.svg" />
    <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0" />
    <title>Vite + React + TS</title>
    <script type="module" crossorigin src="/assets/index-BCCl6N7p.js"></script>
    <link rel="stylesheet" crossorigin href="/assets/index-Bj7p508h.css">
  </head>
  <body>
    <div id="root"></div>
  </body>
</html>
* Connection #0 to host freshmart.duckdns.org left intact
ubuntu@ip-172-31-14-120:~$
```


Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service
Clusters
Settings
Console settings
Amazon EKS Anywhere
Enterprise Subscriptions
Related services
Amazon ECR
AWS Batch
Documentation
Freshfarm-cluster
Delete cluster
Upgrade version
View dashboard
End of extended support for Kubernetes version (1.28) is November 26, 2025. If you don't upgrade your cluster to a later version before that date, it will be automatically upgraded to Kubernetes version 1.29.
Upgrade now
Cluster info Info
Status
Active
Kubernetes version Info
1.28
Support period
Extended support until November 26, 2025
Provider
EKS
Cluster health issues
0
Upgrade insights
6
Node health issues
0
Overview
Resources
Compute
Networking
Add-ons
Access
Observability
Update history
Tags
Details
API server endpoint
https://7B6D6774B18DA4FAB6B8A0F695E1ABA9.gr7.eu-north-1.eks.amazonaws.com
OpenID Connect provider URL
https://oidc.eks.eu-north-1.amazonaws.com/id/7B6D6774B18DA4FAB6B8A0F695E1ABA9
Created
4 hours ago
Certificate authority
LS0tLS1CRUdJTiBDRVJUSUZJQ0FURS0tLS0tCk1JSURCVENDQWUyZDF35UJBZDUZIgvdjJaeVpQb2d5RFFZSktvWkdodNOQVFFTEJRQXdGVEVUTUJFR0ExVUUKQXhNS2EzVmlaWEp1WlhSbGN6QWVGd
Cluster IAM role ARN
arn:aws:iam::794038256791:role/Freshfarm-cluster-cluster View in IAM
Cluster ARN
arn:aws:eks:eu-north-1:794038256791:cluster/Freshfarm-cluster
Platform version Info
eks.38
EKS Auto Mode Info
Manage
Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service > Clusters > Freshfarm-cluster
Resource types
Workloads
PodTemplates
Pods
ReplicaSets
Deployments
StatefulSets
DaemonSets
Jobs
CronJobs
PriorityClasses
HorizontalPodAutoscalers
Cluster
Service and networking
Config and secrets
Workloads: Pods (3)
Pod is the smallest and simplest Kubernetes object. A Pod represents a set of running containers on your cluster. Learn more
View details
freshmart
Filter Pods by name
Name
Created
freshmart-5f77fcccbf-5t4hd
2 hours ago
freshmart-5f77fcccbf-8hvkx
2 hours ago
freshmart-5f77fcccbf-bj92s
2 hours ago
Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service > Clusters > Freshfarm-cluster > freshmart-ingress
freshmart-ingress
Structured view
Raw view
Details
Created
3 hours ago
Namespace
freshmart
Load balancer URLs
af7e15cedc64d43e1aec0987d73e7a8a-1151959220.eu-north-1.elb.amazonaws.com
Ingress class name
nginx
Rules
Host: freshmart.duckdns.org
Labels (0)
Key
Value
No labels
No labels have been defined for this resource.
Annotations (2)
Key
Value
kubectl.kubernetes.io/last-applied-configuration
{"apiVersion":"networking.k8s.io/v1","kind":"Ingress","metadata":{"annotations":
kubernetes.io/ingress.class
nginx
Events (0)
Type
Reason
Event time
From
Message


Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service > Clusters > Freshfarm-cluster
Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service
Clusters
Settings
Console settings
Amazon EKS Anywhere
Enterprise Subscriptions
Related services
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AWS Batch
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Upgrade now
Cluster info Info
Status
Active
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1.28
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Cluster health issues
0
Upgrade insights
6
Node health issues
0
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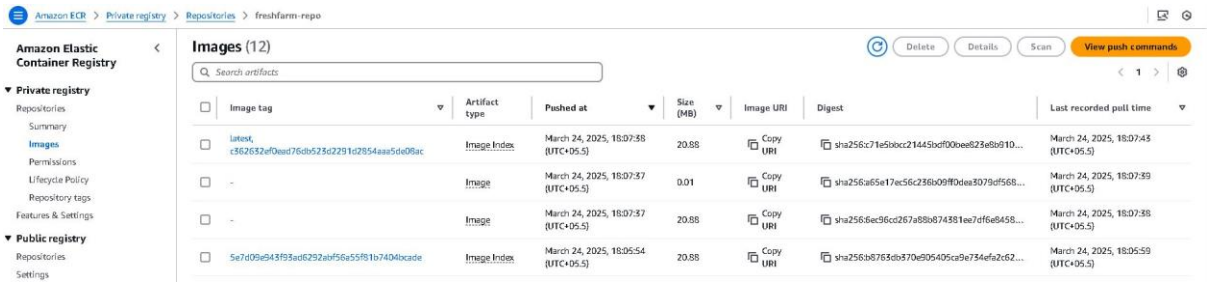
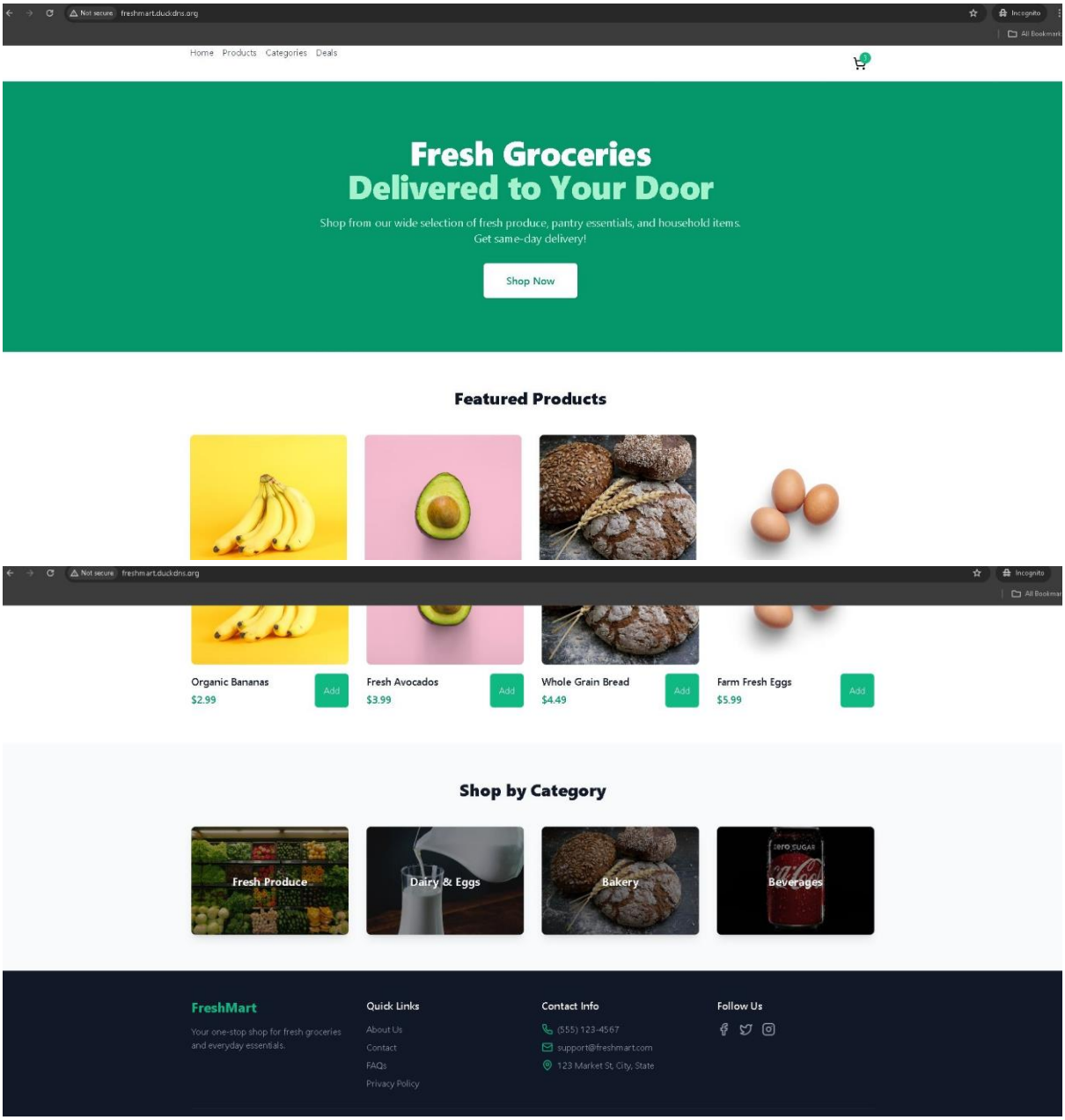
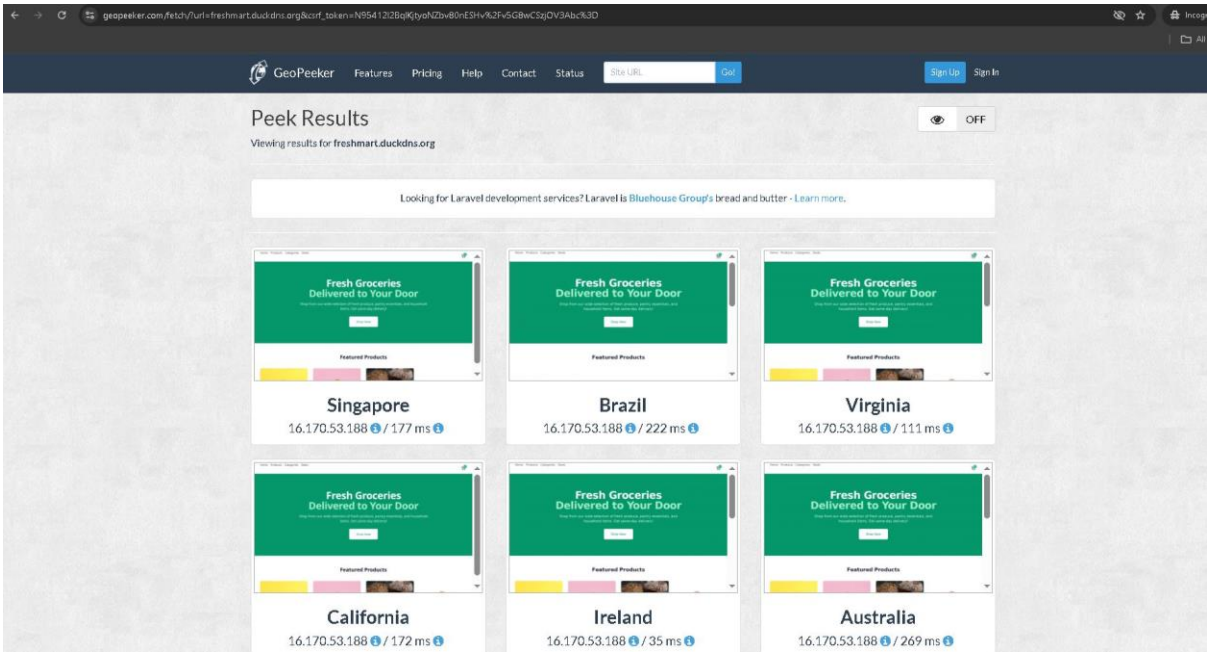
Access
Observability
Update history
Tags
Nodes (2) Info
Filter Nodes by property or value
Node name
Instance type
Compute
Managed by
Created
Status
ip-10-0-1-230.eu-north-1.compute.internal
t3.medium
Node group
general-20250524095021163300000017
4 hours ago
Ready
ip-10-0-3-241.eu-north-1.compute.internal
t3.medium
Node group
general-20250524095021163300000017
4 hours ago
Ready
Node groups (1) Info
Edit
Delete
Add node group
Node groups implement basic compute scaling through EC2 Auto Scaling groups.
Group name
Desired size
AMI release version
Launch template
Status


Amazon ECR > Private registry > Repositories > freshfarm-repo
Amazon Elastic Container Registry
Private registry
Repositories
Summary
Images
Permissions
Lifecycle Policy
Repository tags
Features & Settings
Public registry
Repositories
Settings
Images (12)
Delete
Details
Scan
View push commands
Search artifacts
Image tag
Artifact type
Pushed at
Size (MB)
Image URI
Digest
Last recorded pull time
latest, c362632ef0ead76db523d2291d2854aaa5de08ac
Image Index
March 24, 2025, 18:07:38 (UTC+05:5)
20.88
Copy URI
sha256:c71e5bbcc21445bdf00bee823e8b910...
March 24, 2025, 18:07:43 (UTC+05:5)
-
Image
March 24, 2025, 18:07:37 (UTC+05:5)
0.01
Copy URI
sha256:a65e17ec56c236b09ff0dea3079df568...
March 24, 2025, 18:07:39 (UTC+05:5)
-
Image
March 24, 2025, 18:07:37 (UTC+05:5)
20.88
Copy URI
sha256:6ec96cd267a88b874381ee7df6e8458...
March 24, 2025, 18:07:38 (UTC+05:5)
5e7d09e943f93ad6292abf56a55f81b7404bcade
Image Index
March 24, 2025, 18:06:54 (UTC+05:5)
20.88
Copy URI
sha256:b8763db370e905405ca9e734efa2c62...
March 24, 2025, 18:06:59 (UTC+05:5)

Check the Website

Visit http://freshmart.duckdns.org in a browser.





Troubleshooting Common Issues

Application Returning 404 Not Found?

kubectl logs -l app.kubernetes.io/name=ingress-nginx -n ingress-nginx --tail=50 | grep "GET"

AWS Load Balancer Not Forwarding Requests?

kubectl get svc -n ingress-nginx

Ingress Hostname Mismatch?

curl -v -H "Host: freshmart.duckdns.org" http://<AWS-LOAD-BALANCER>

DuckDNS Not Pointing to Correct IP?

dig +short freshmart.duckdns.org

curl "https://www.duckdns.org/update?domains=freshmart&token=YOUR_DUCKDNS_TOKEN&ip=<AWS-LOAD-BALANCER>"

Conclusion

By following this guide, you have successfully **deployed an application to AWS EKS using GitHub Actions CI/CD**.
