Deploy Identity Services Engine (ISE) Version 3.4 on AWS

Contents

Introduction

This document describes how to configure Cisco ISE on AWS using CloudFormation template (CFT) and Amazon Machine Image (AMI).

Prerequisites

Requirements

Cisco recommends that you have knowledge of these topics before proceeding with this deployment:

- Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE)
- AWS EC2 instance management and networking
- SSH key pair generation and usage
- Basic understanding of VPCs, security groups, and DNS/NTP configuration in AWS

Components Used

The information in this document is based on these software and hardware versions:

- Identity Services Engine (ISE)

- Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Console

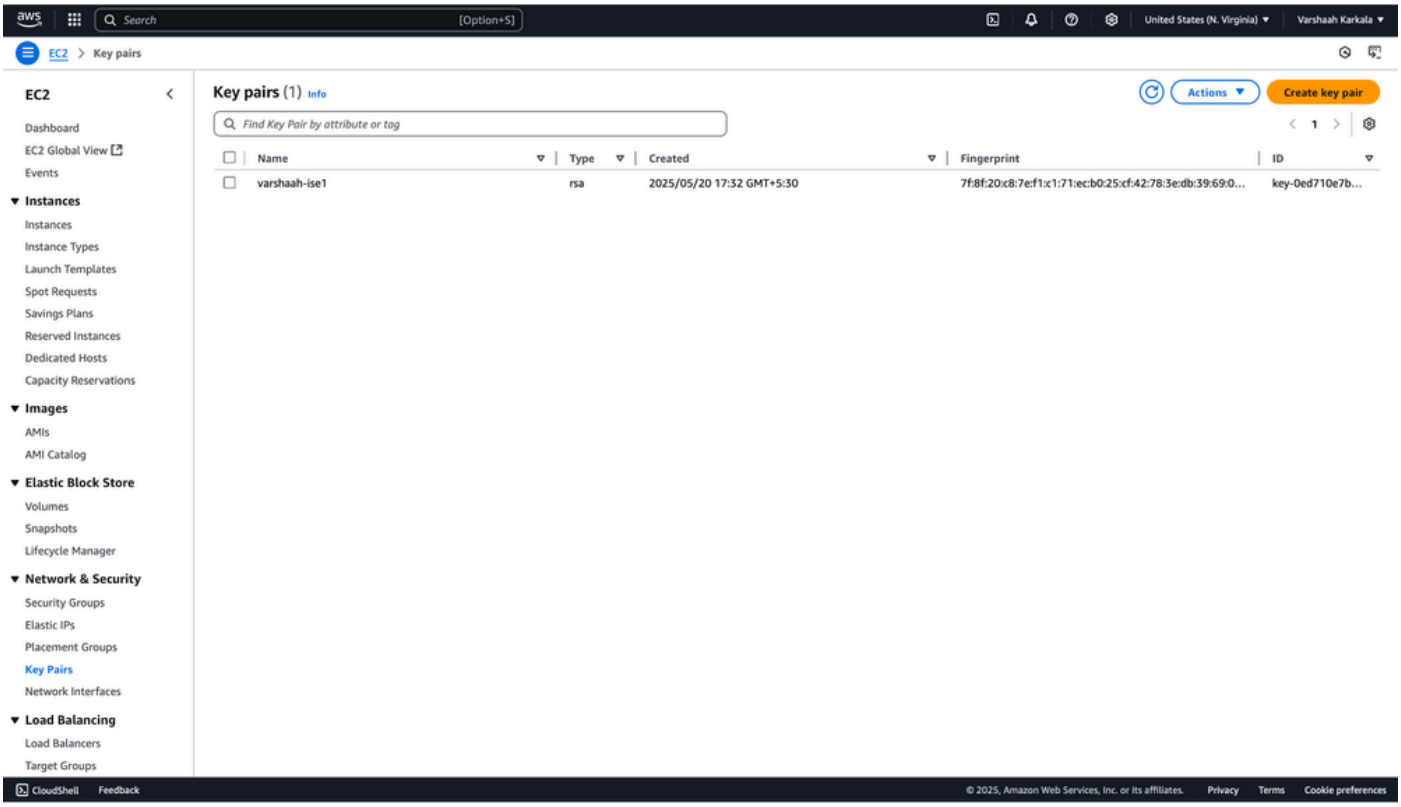
The information in this document was created from the devices in a specific lab environment. All of the devices used in this document started with a cleared (default) configuration. If your network is live, ensure that you understand the potential impact of any command.

Configure

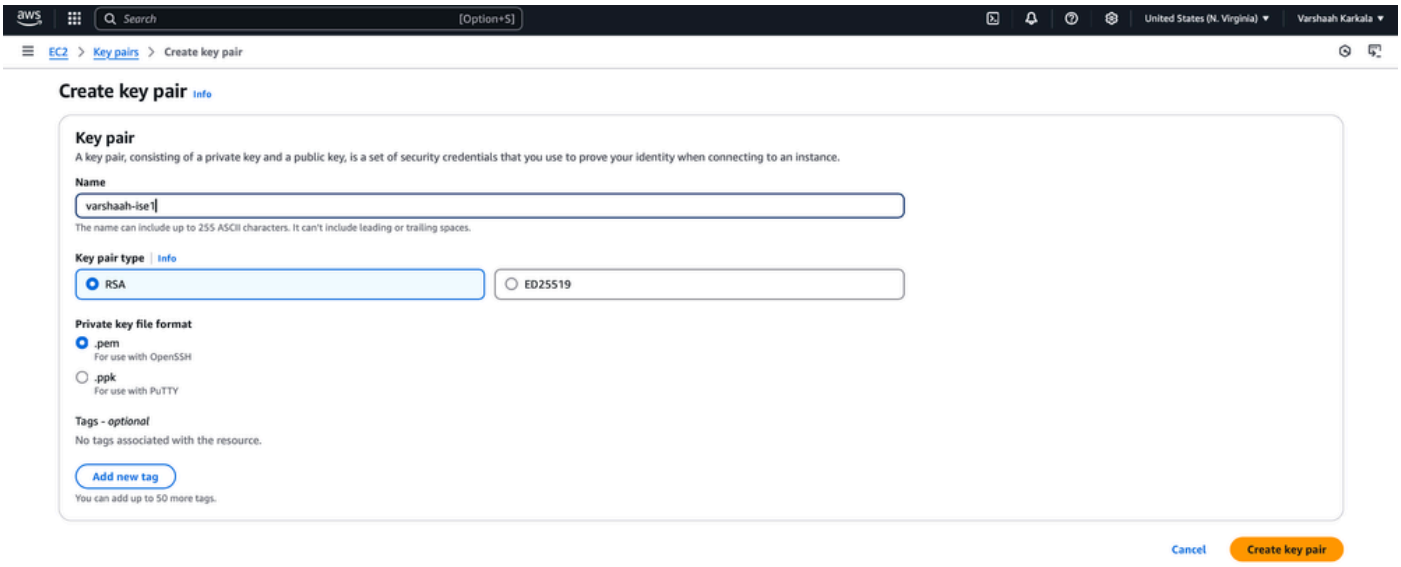
Part 1: Generating an SSH Key Pair

1. For this deployment, you can either use a pre-existing key pair or create a new one.

2. To create a new pair, navigate to **EC2 > Network and Security > Key Pairs** and click **Create key pair**.



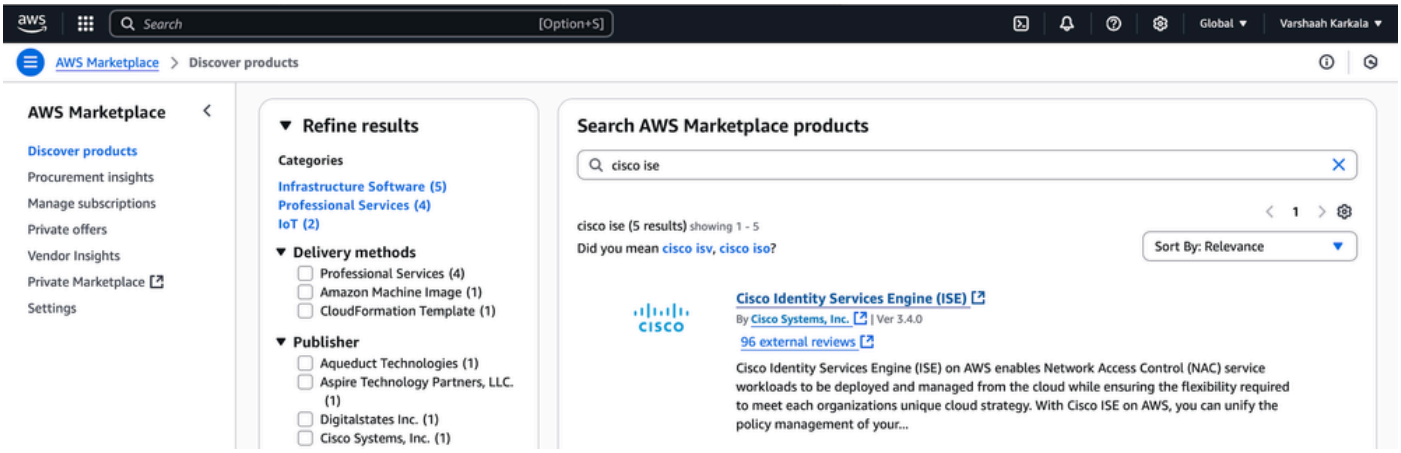
3. Enter the **key pair name** and click **Create key pair**.

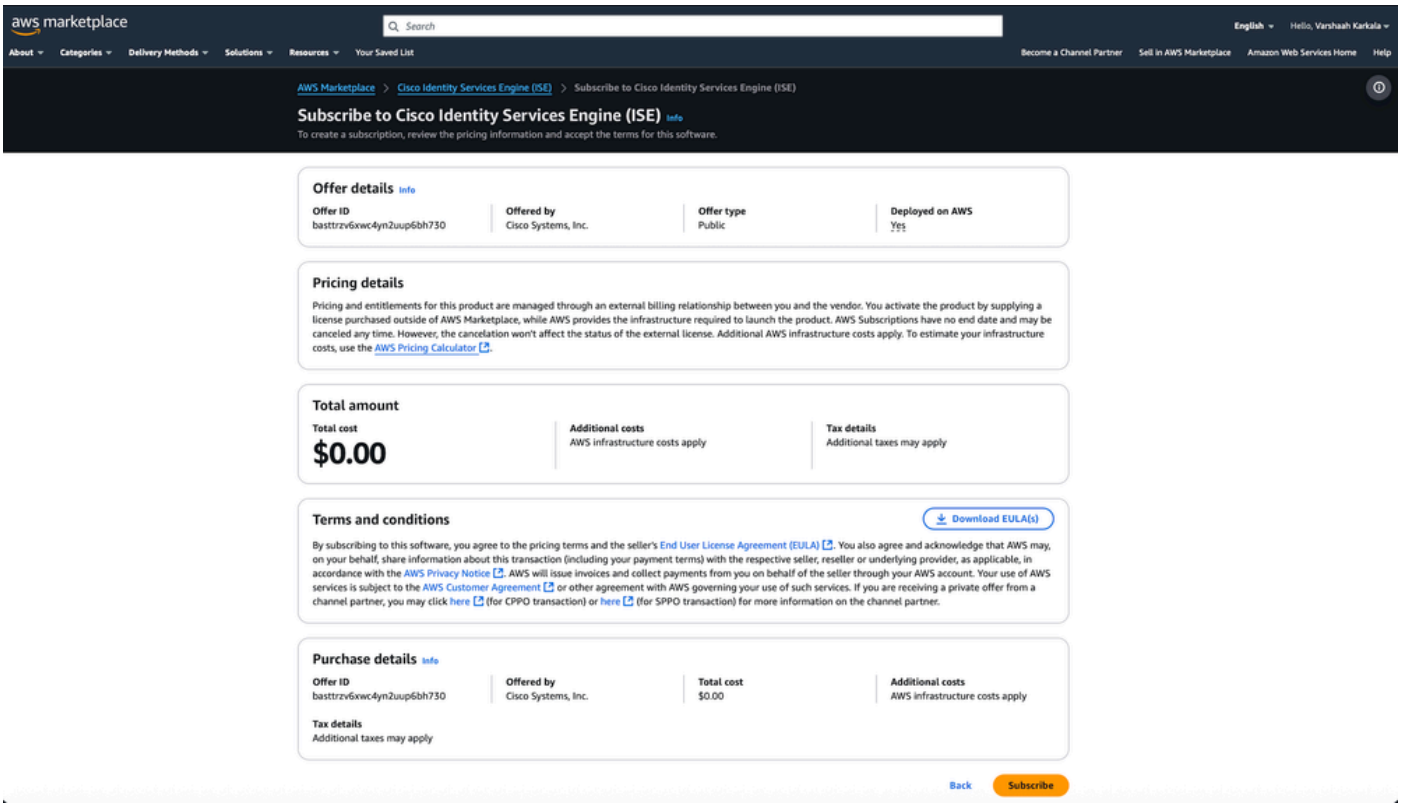


The key pair file (.pem) is downloaded on your local machine. Ensure that you keep this file safe as this is the only way in which you can access your EC2 instance once it is launched.

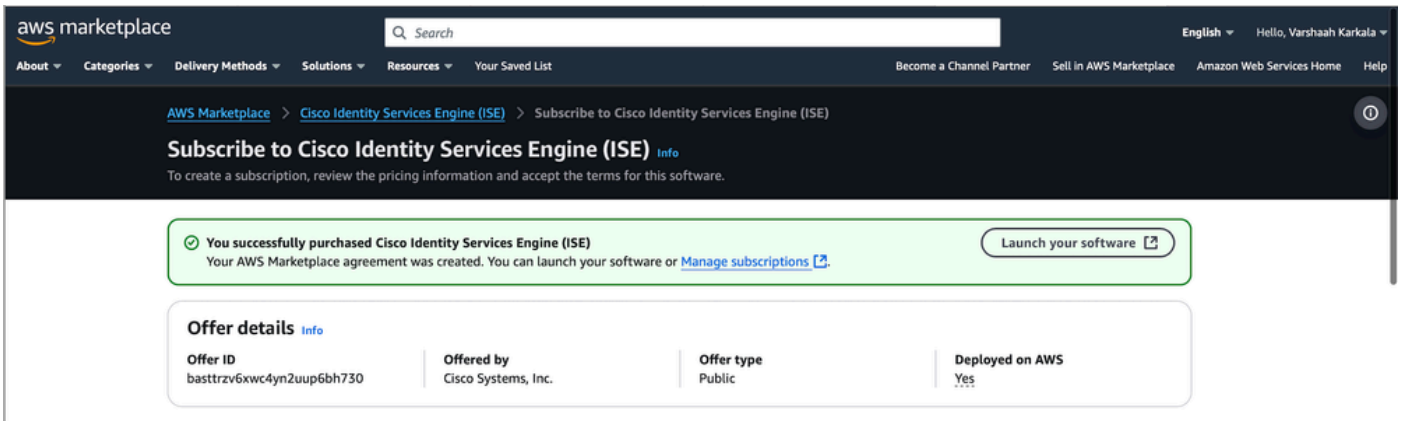
Part 2: Configuring ISE Using a CloudFormation Template (CFT)

1. Log in to the AWS Management Console and search for **AWS Marketplace Subscriptions.**
2. In the search bar, type **cisco ise** and click **Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE)** from the results. Click **Subscribe**.

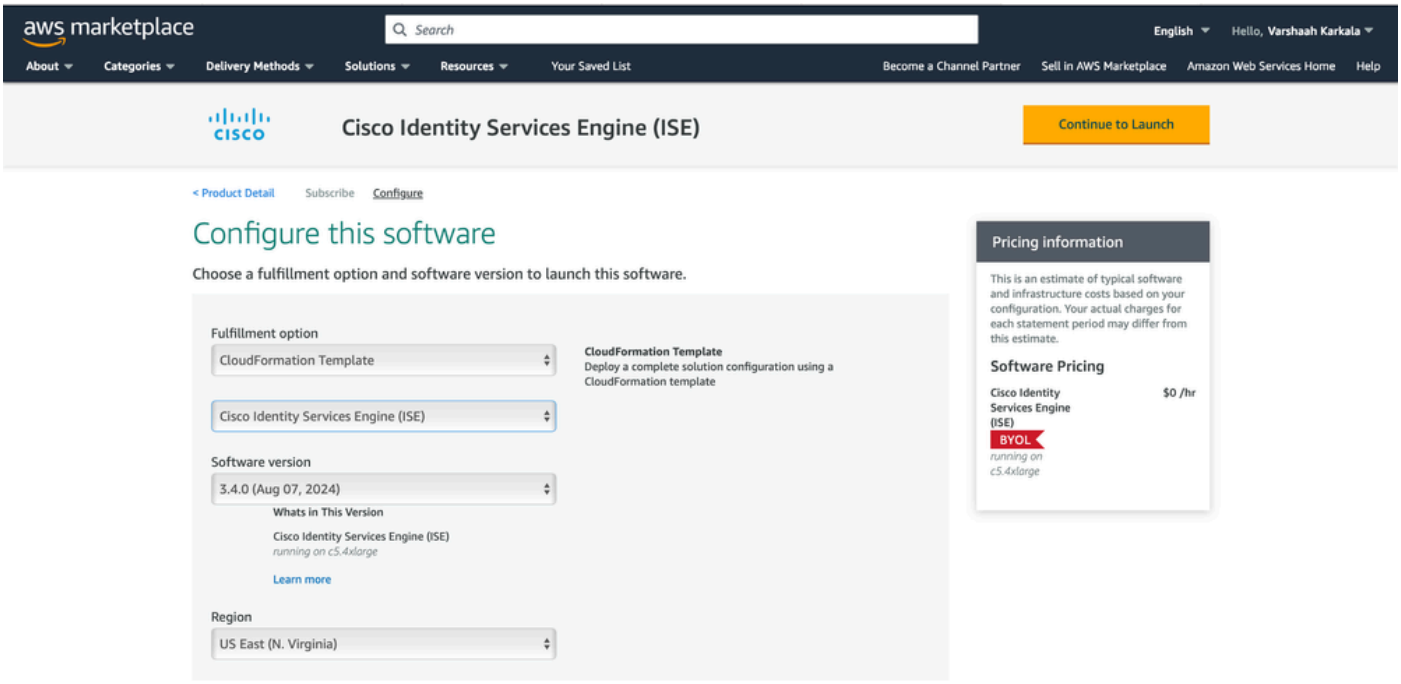




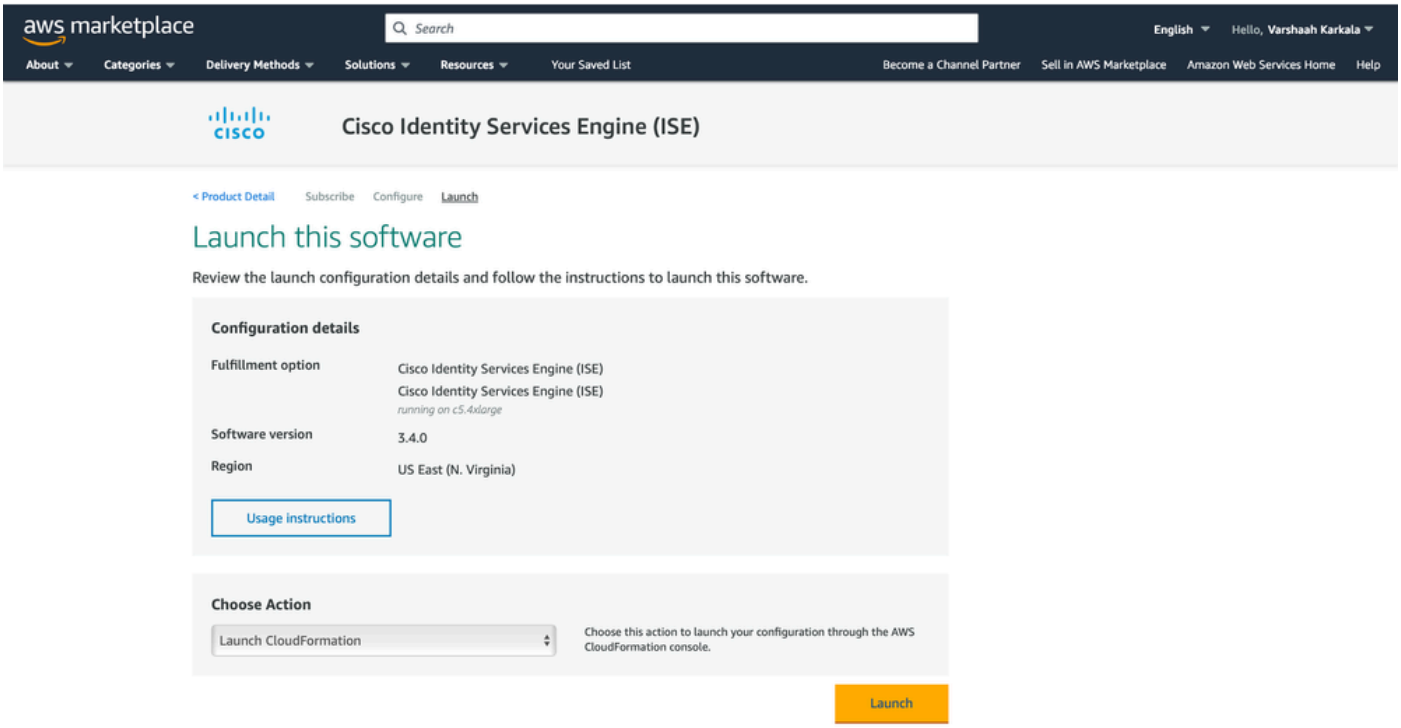
3. After subscription, click **Launch Your Software**.



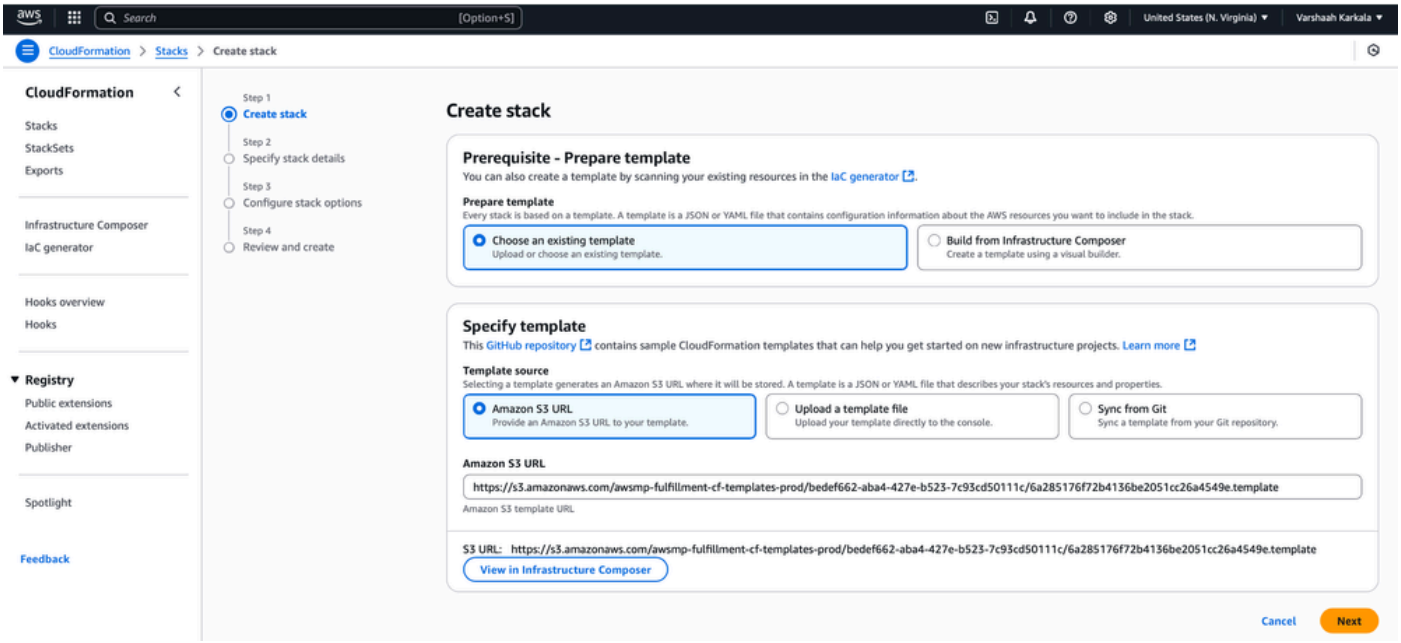
4. Under **Fulfilment Option,** choose **CloudFormation Template.** Choose the **Software version (ISE version)**, and **Region** where you want to deploy the instance. Click **Continue to Launch.**



5. On the next page, choose **Launch CloudFormation** as the action and click **Launch**.

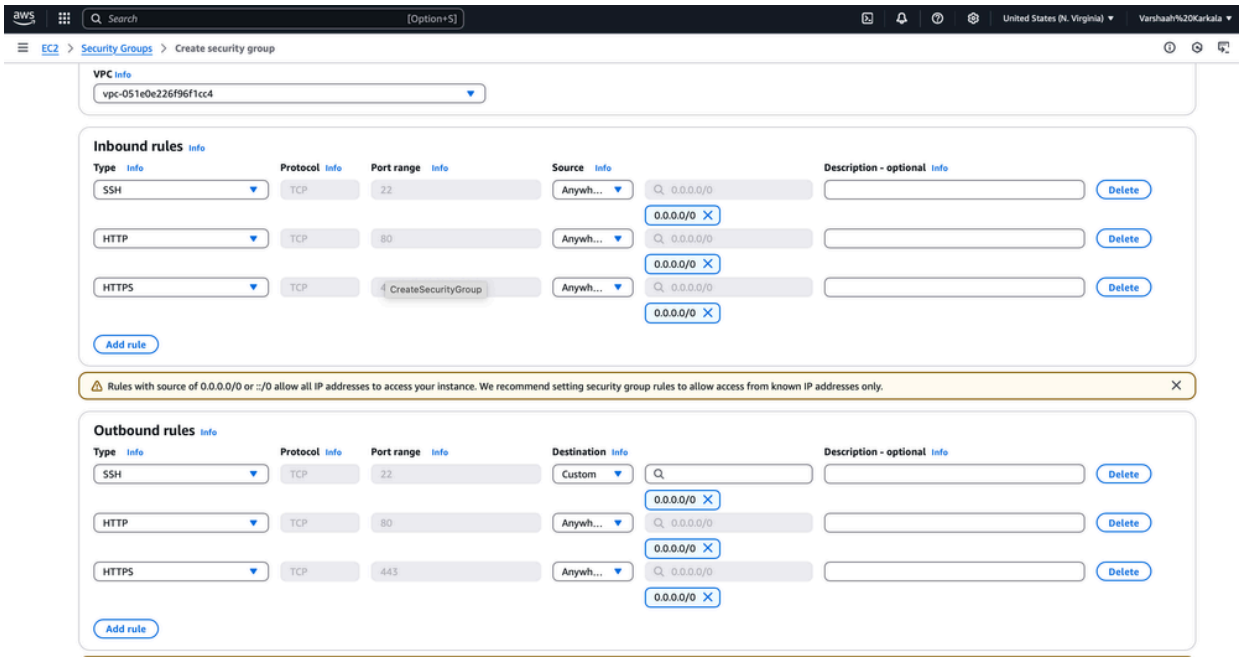


6. Under the stack settings, keep the default settings and click **Next**.



7. Enter required parameters:

- **Stack Name**: Provide a unique name for your stack.
- **Hostname**: Assign the hostname for the ISE node.
- **Key Pair**: Select the key pair generated or pre-existing to access the EC2 instance later.
- **Management Security Group**:
    - Either use the default security group (as shown) or create a custom one through the EC2 dashboard.
    - To create a new security group, navigate to the **EC2 Dashboard** and navigate to **Network and Security > Security Groups** to create a new security group.
    - Click **Create security group** and enter the required **details**.
    - Ensure the security group is configured to allow the required inbound and outbound traffic. For example, enable SSH (port 22) access from your IP address for CLI access.

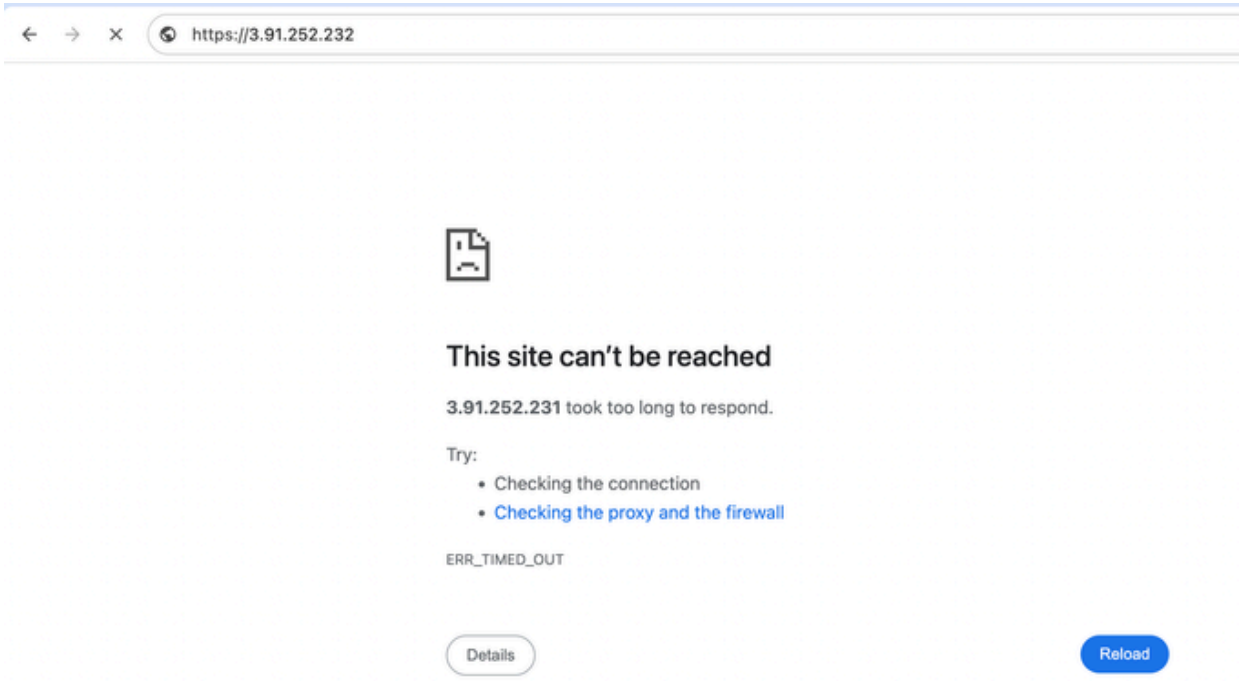


- If **SSH access** is not properly configured, you may encounter an "Operation timed out" error when attempting to connect via SSH.

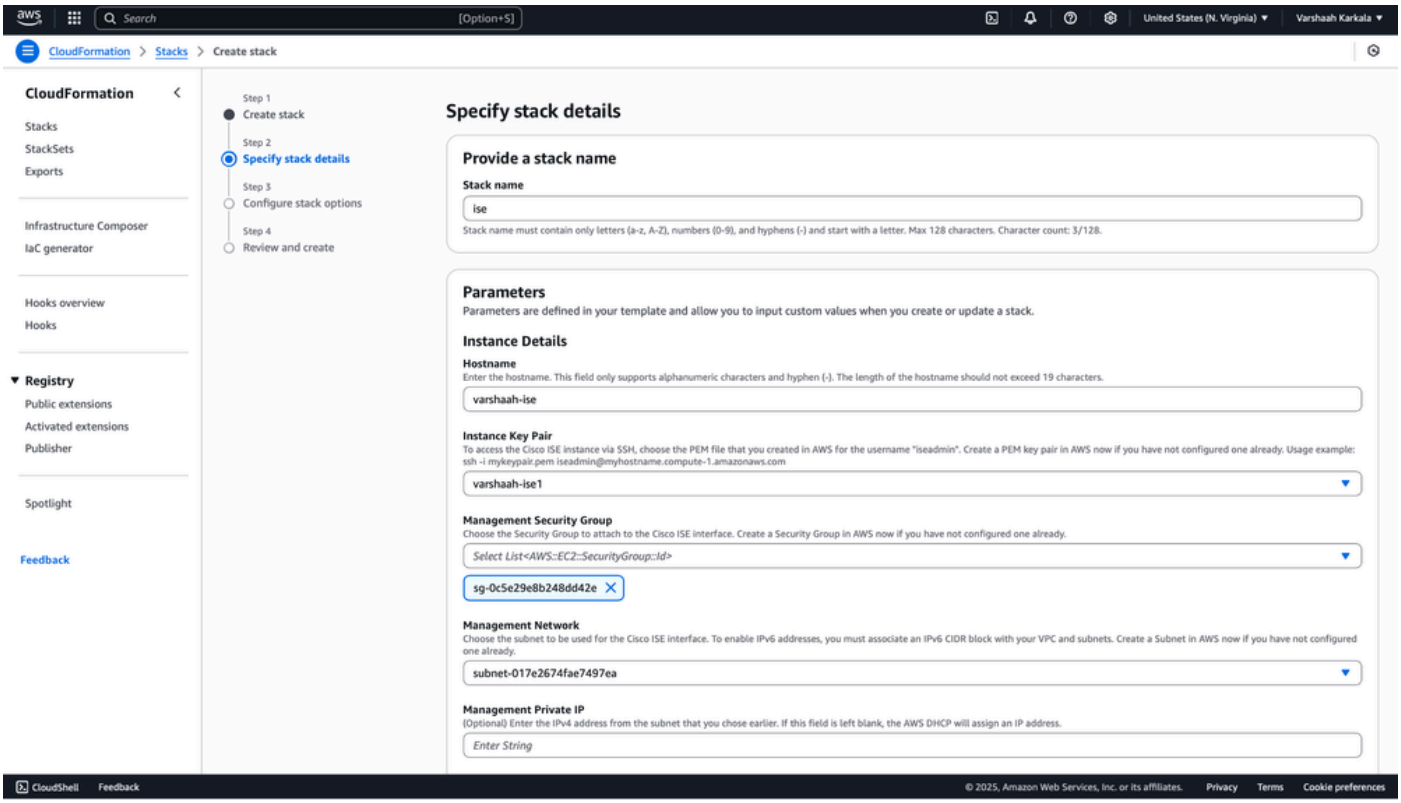
```
[                    -M-L63P Downloads % chmod 400 varshaah-ise1.pem
[                    -M-L63P Downloads % ssh -i varshaah-ise1.pem admin@3.91.252.232

ssh: connect to host 3.91.252.232 port 22: Operation timed out
```

- If HTTP/HTTPS access is not configured, you may see a "This site can't be reached" error when trying to access the GUI.



- Management Network: One of the pre-existing subnets is selected.

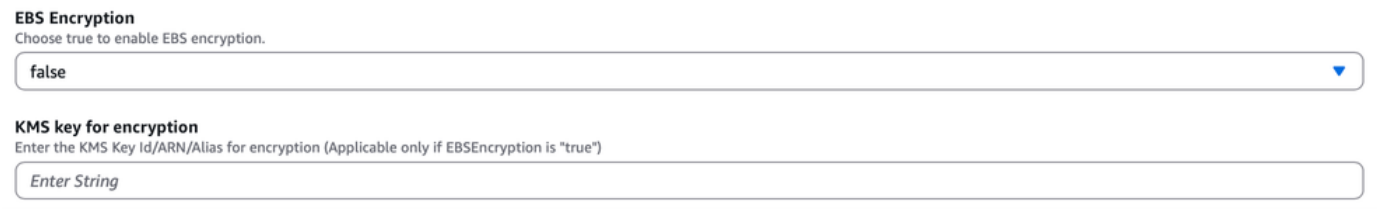


If your design requires a distributed deployment with some nodes hosted in AWS and others on-premises, configure a **dedicated VPC** with a private subnet and establish a VPN tunnel to the **On-Prem VPN Headend Device** to enable connectivity between AWS-hosted and on-premises ISE nodes.

For detailed steps on configuring the VPN Headend Device, refer to [this guide].

8. EBS Encryption

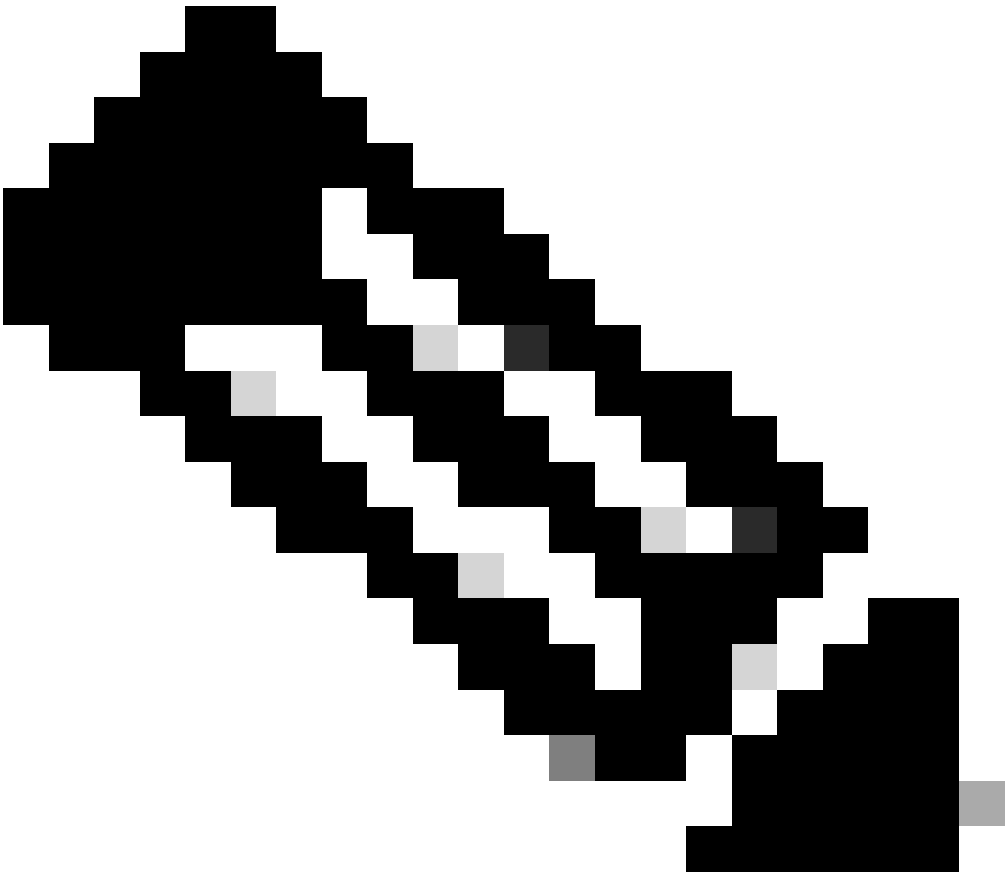
- Scroll down to locate the EBS encryption settings.
- Set **EBS Encryption** to **False** unless you have specific encryption needs.



9. Network Configuration:

- Scroll down to access options for configuring network settings, such as the **DNS domain**, **Primary Name Server**, and **Primary NTP Server**.

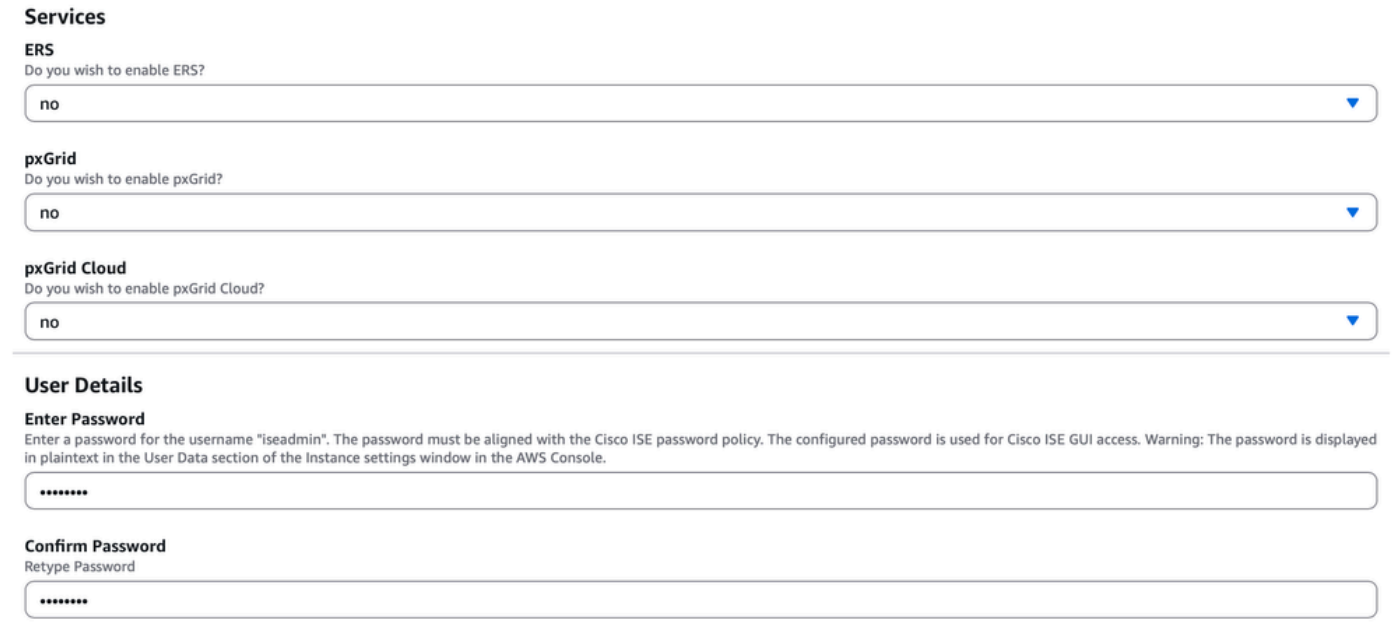
  Ensure these values are entered accurately.



Note: Incorrect syntax here can prevent ISE services from starting properly after deployment.

10. Service and User Details:

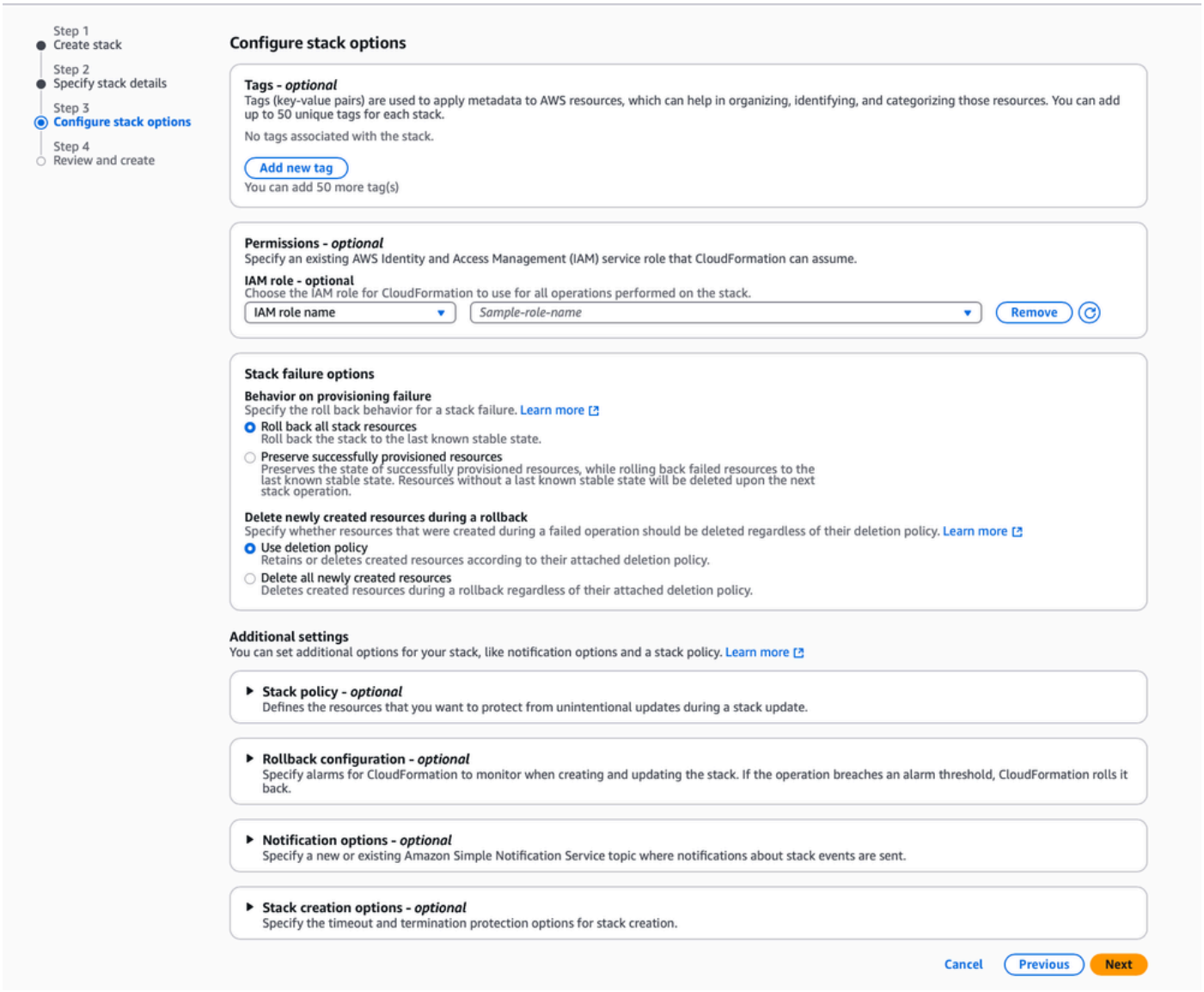
- Scroll down to locate the option for enabling ERS and pxGrid services
- Choose whether to enable **ERS** and **pxGrid** services by selecting **yes** or **no**.
- Under **User Details**, set the **password** for the default **admin** user.



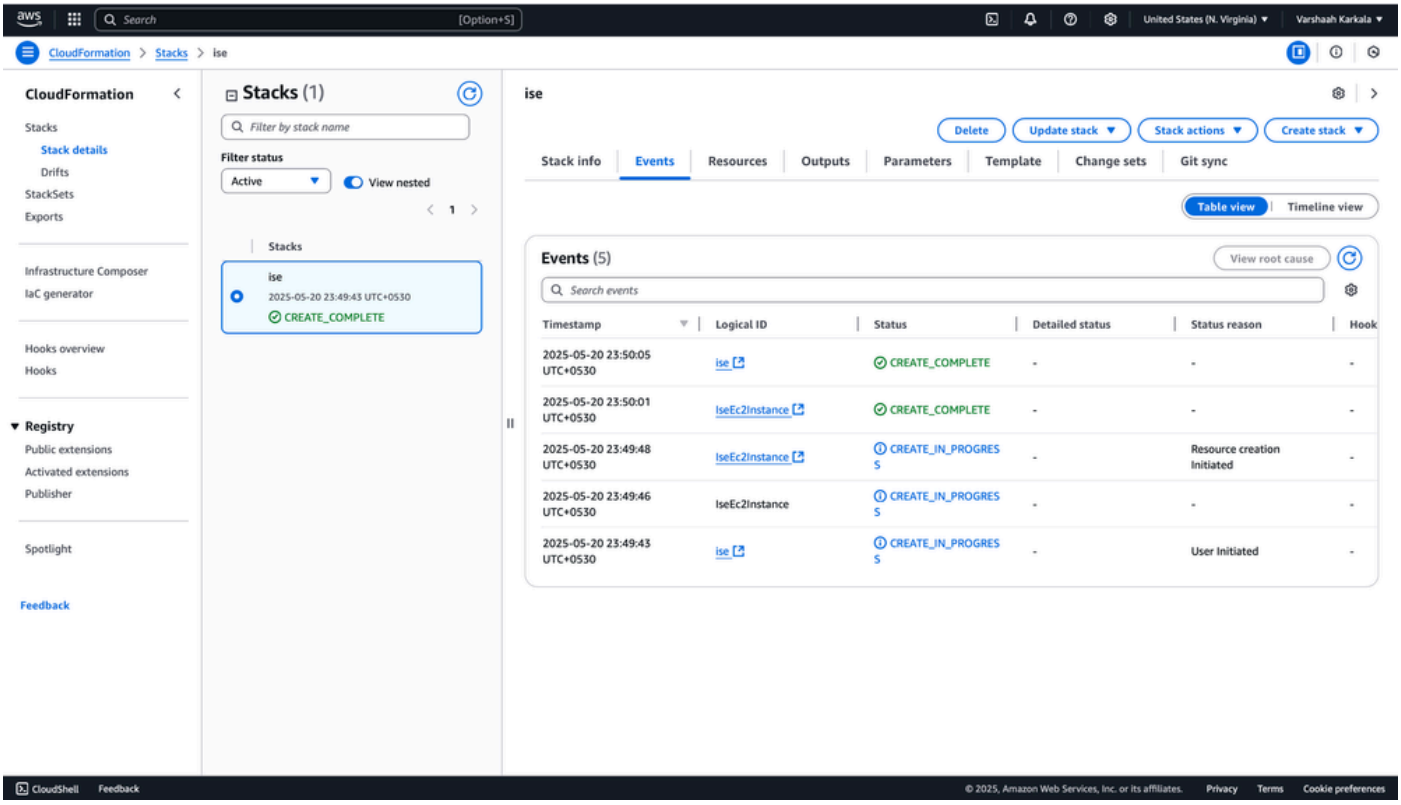
- Click **Next.**

11. Configure **stack Options**:

- Leave all default options as they are and click **Next**.



12. Review the template to ensure all configurations are correct, then click **Submit**. Once the template is built, it resembles the example shown below:



13. Access the stack details:
Navigate to **CloudFormation > Stacks** and locate your deployed stack.

14. View Outputs Tab:

Select your **stack** and open the **Outputs** tab. Here, you find important information generated during the deployment process, such as:

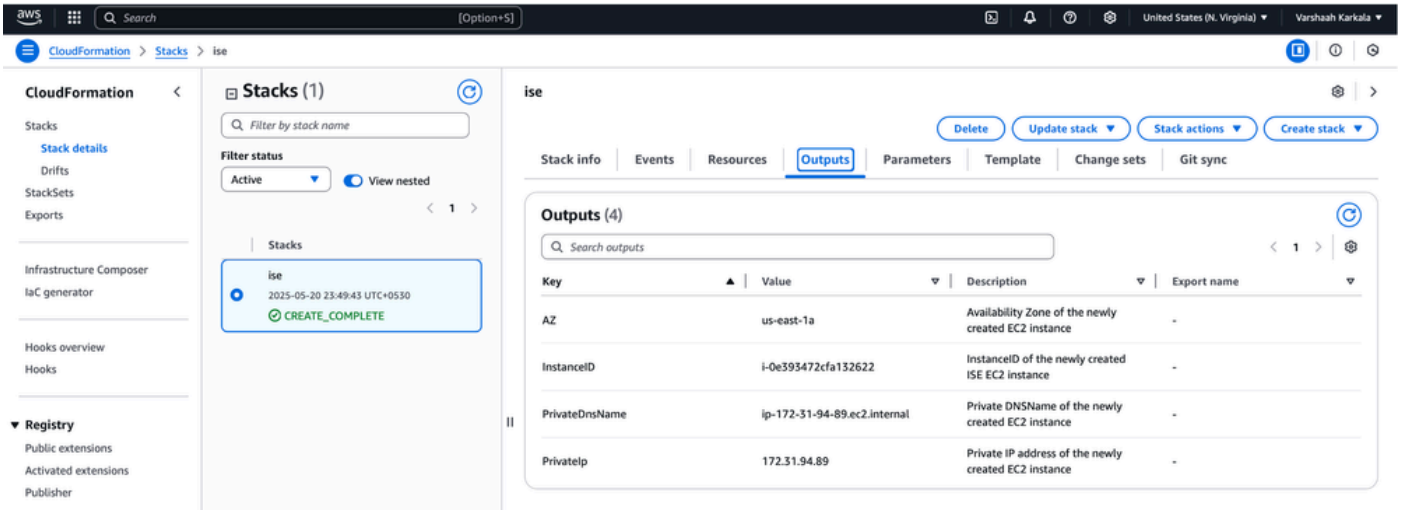
• **Availability Zone**: The region where the resources are deployed.

• **Instance ID**: The unique identifier of the deployed instance.

• **DNS Name**: The private DNS name of the instance, which can be used for remote access.

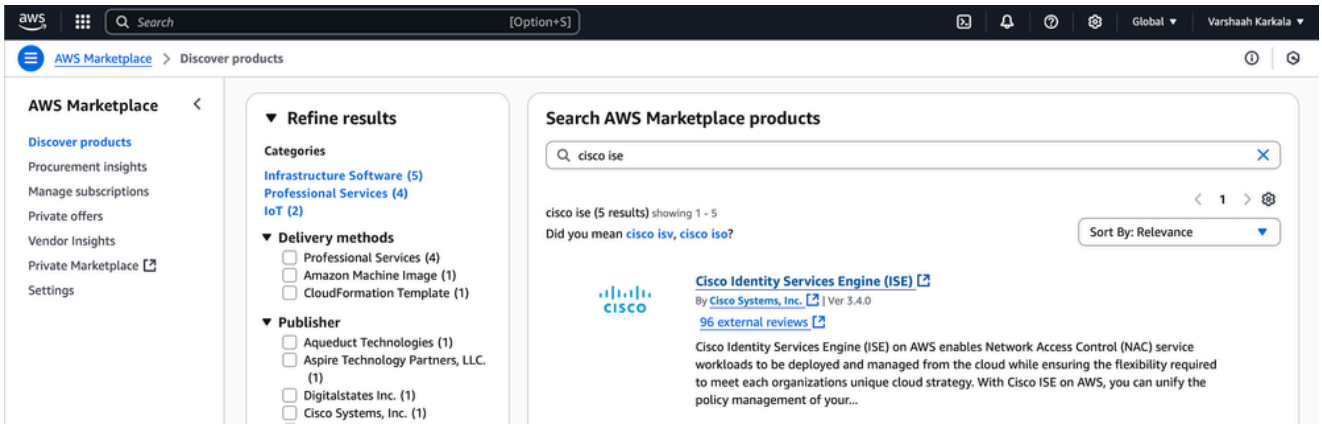
• **IP Address**: The public or private IP address of the instance, depending on your configuration.

This information helps you connect to the instance and verify its availability. The Outputs tab resembles this example:



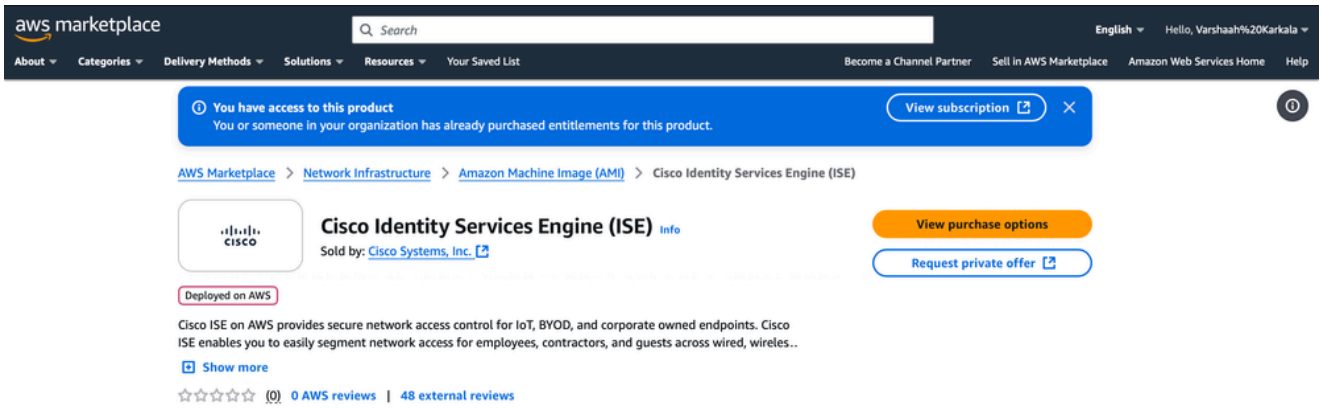
Part 3: Configuring ISE Using an Amazon Machine Image (AMI)

1. Log in to the AWS Management Console and search for **AWS Marketplace Subscriptions**.
2. In the search bar, type **cisco ise** and click **Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE)** from the results.

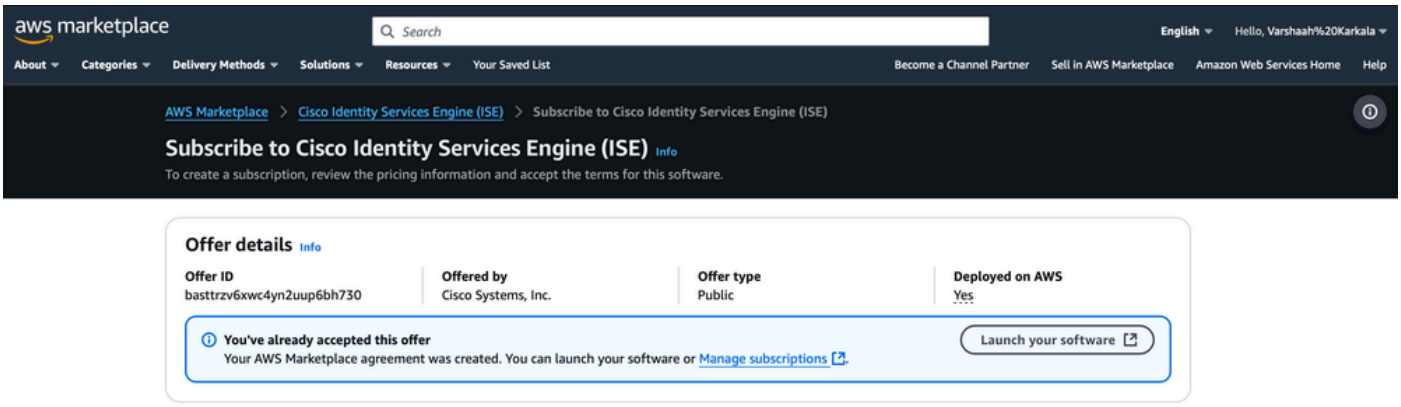


ISE on AWS Markeplace

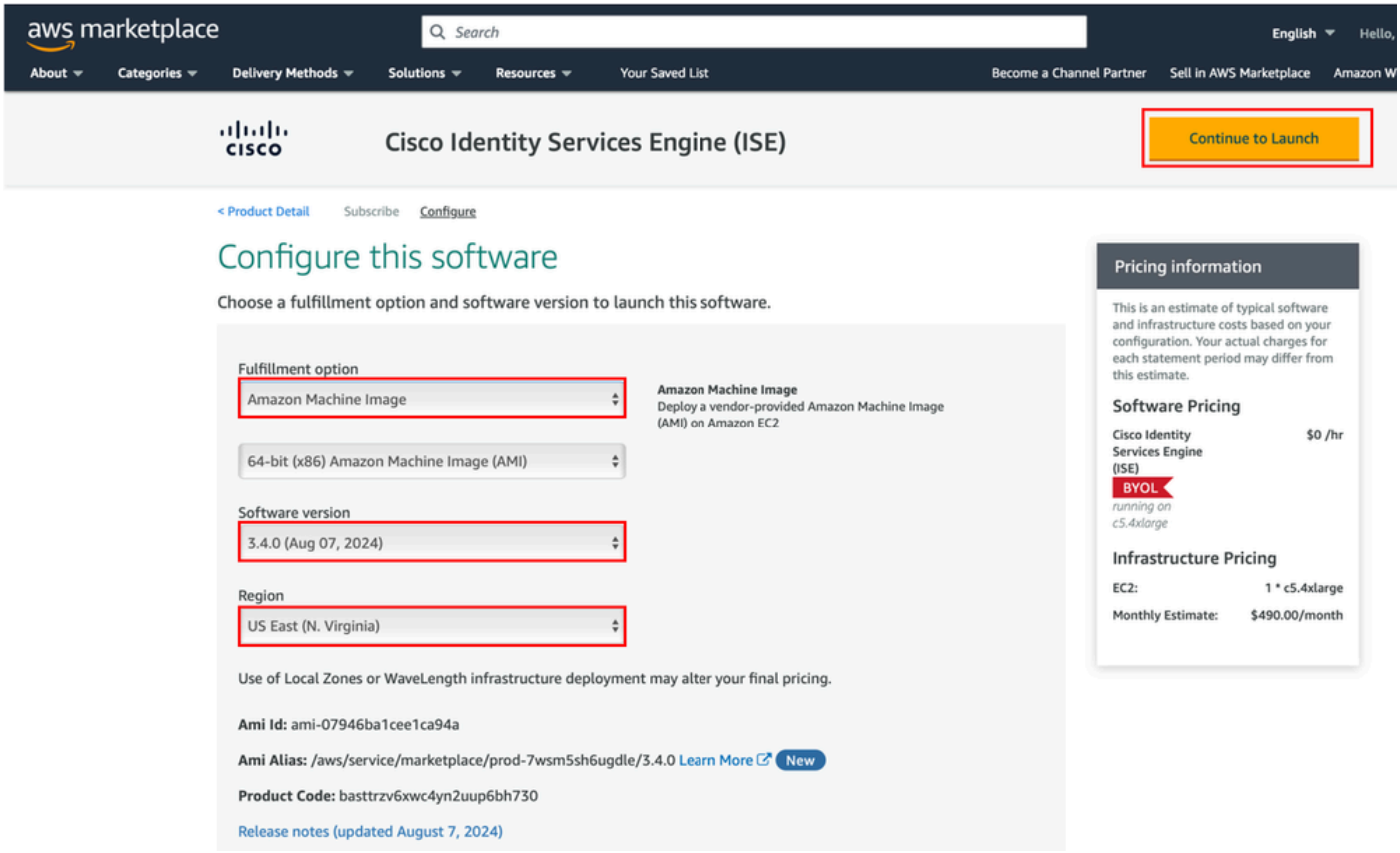
3. Click **View purchase options**.



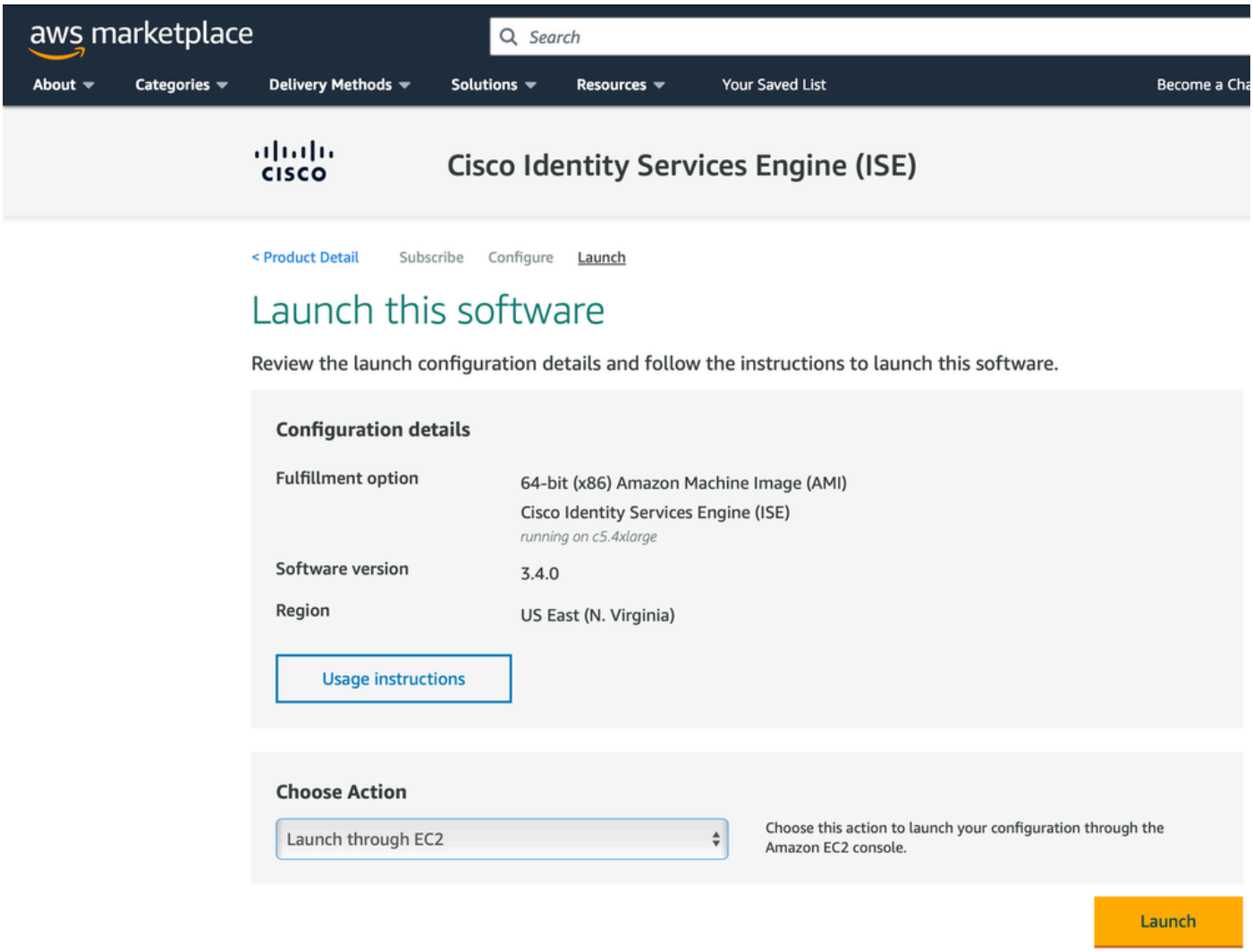
4. Click **Launch your software**.



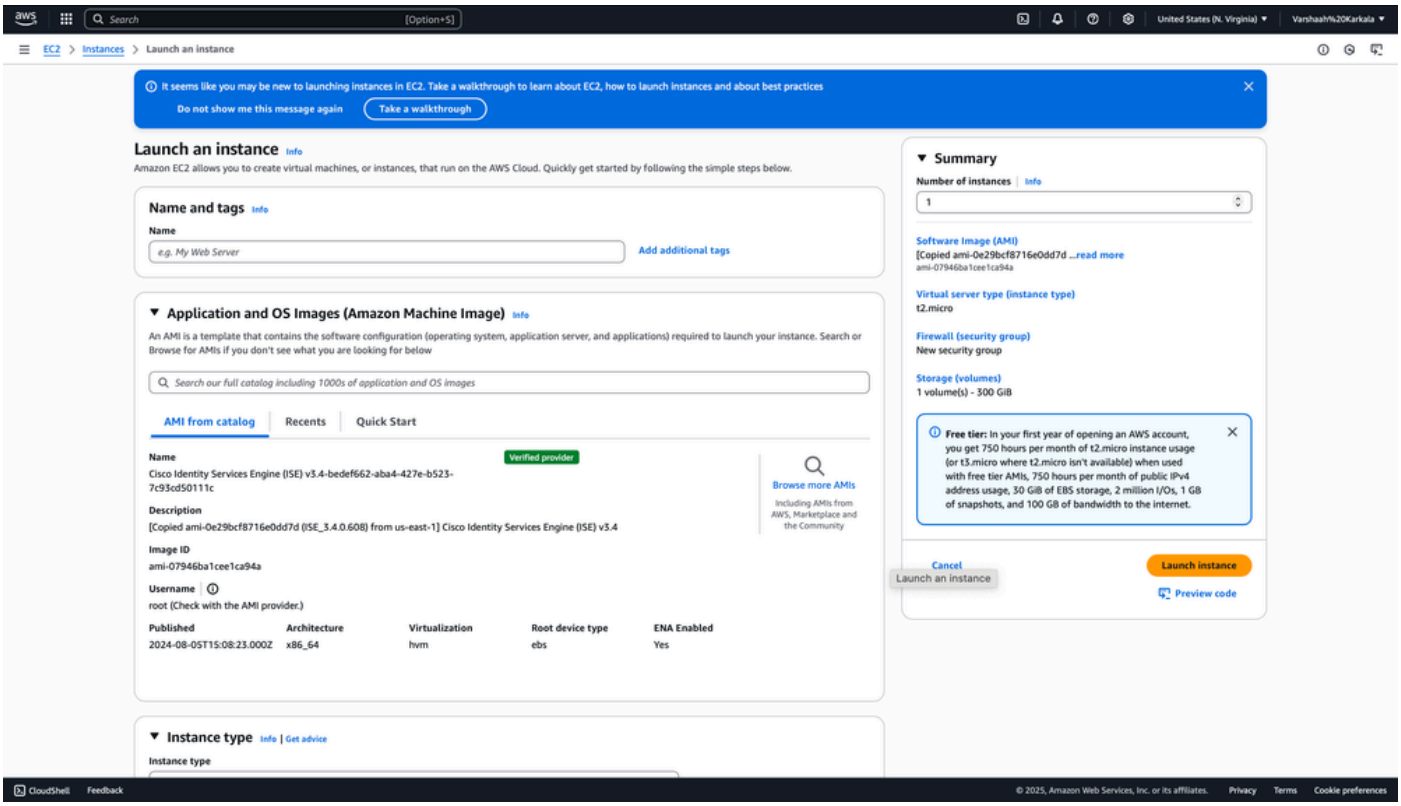
5. Under the **Fulfillment Option**, choose **Amazon Machine Image.** Choose the desired **Software version** and **Region**. Click **Continue to Launch**.



6. Under **Choose Action**, choose **Launch through EC2**. Click **Launch** to proceed.



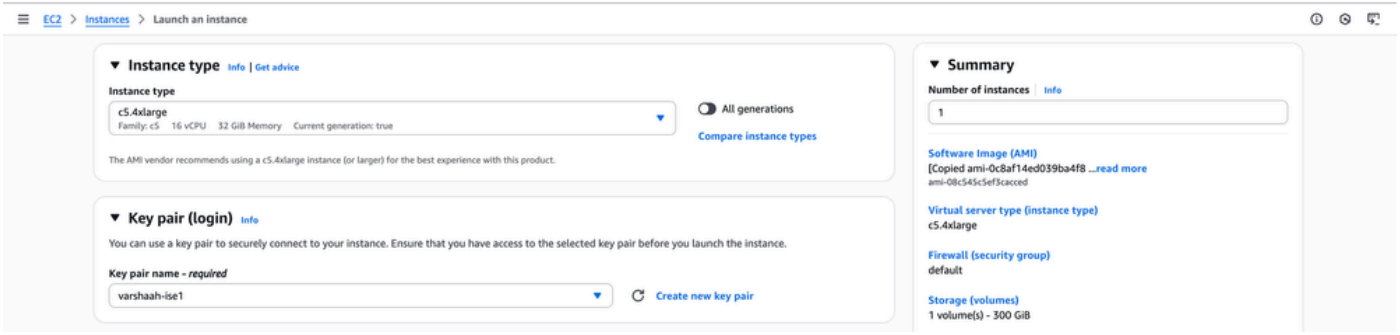
7. You are redirected to the **EC2 Launch an Instance** page to configure your instance settings.



8. Scroll down to the **Instance Type** section and choose an appropriate **instance type** based on your deployment requirements.

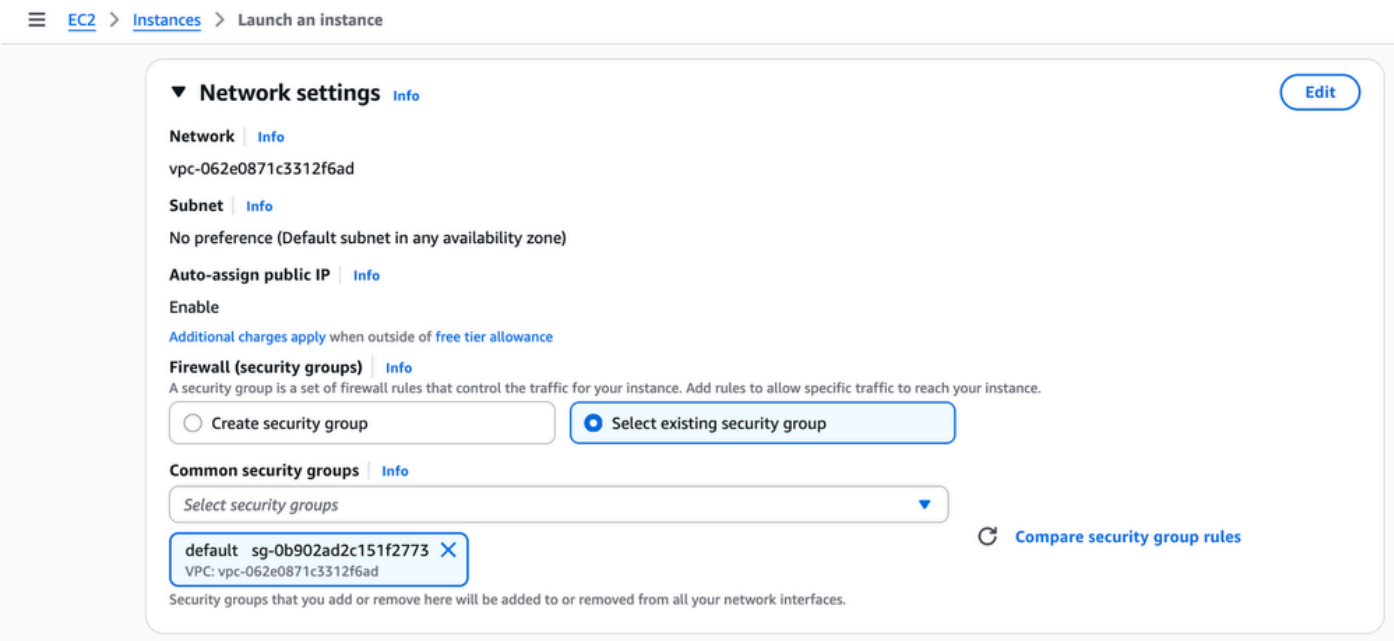
Under **Key pair (login)**, select the **key pair** that was generated earlier or create a **new one** (refer to the key pair creation steps provided previously).

Set the **Number of Instances** to **1**.



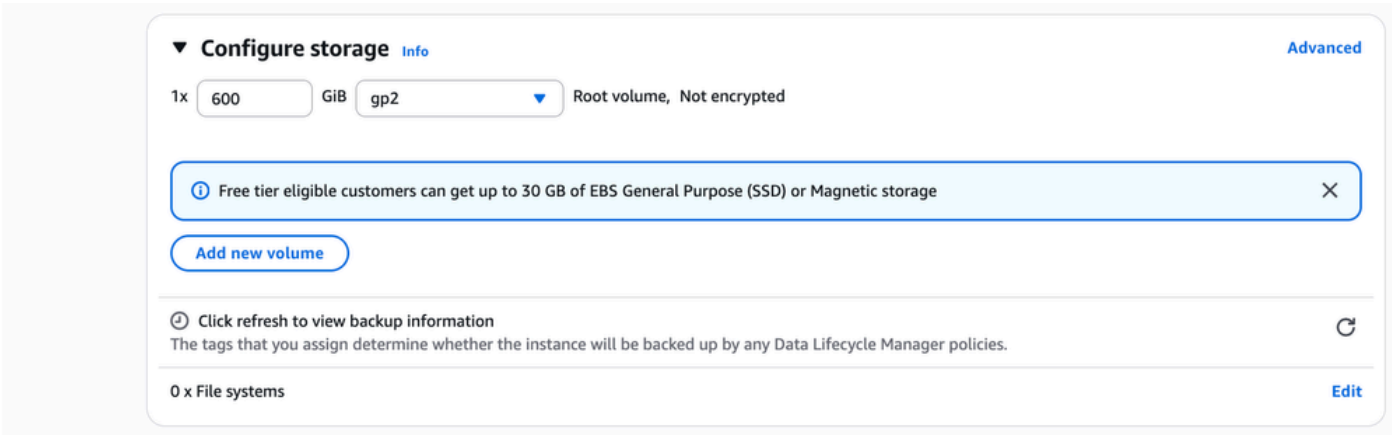
9. In the **Network settings** section:

- Configure your **VPC and subnet** as needed.
- For the **Security Group**, either select an **existing one** or create a **new group** (as shown in the example).



10. In the **Configure Storage** section, configure the desired **volume size**.

Example: 600 GiB using gp2 volume type.



11. In the **Advanced Details** section, configure any additional settings as required for your deployment, such as **IAM instance profile**, **user data**, or **shutdown behavior**.

▼ **Advanced details** Info

Domain join directory | Info

Select ▼ Create new directory

IAM instance profile | Info

Select ▼ Create new IAM profile

Hostname type | Info

IP name ▼

DNS Hostname | Info

- Enable IP name IPv4 (A record) DNS requests
- Enable resource-based IPv4 (A record) DNS requests
- Enable resource-based IPv6 (AAAA record) DNS requests

Instance auto-recovery | Info

Default ▼

Shutdown behavior | Info

Stop ▼

Stop - Hibernate behavior | Info

Disable ▼

Termination protection | Info

Disable ▼

Stop protection | Info

Select ▼

Detailed CloudWatch monitoring | Info

Disable ▼

Credit specification | Info

Standard ▼

Placement group | Info

Select ▼ Create new placement group

EBS-optimized instance | Info

Disable ▼

Instance bandwidth configuration | Info

Default ▼

Purchasing option | Info

- (●) None
- ( ) Capacity Blocks
  Launch instances for your active capacity blocks
- ( ) Spot instances
  Request Spot Instances at the Spot price, capped at the On-Demand price

Capacity reservation | Info

None ▼

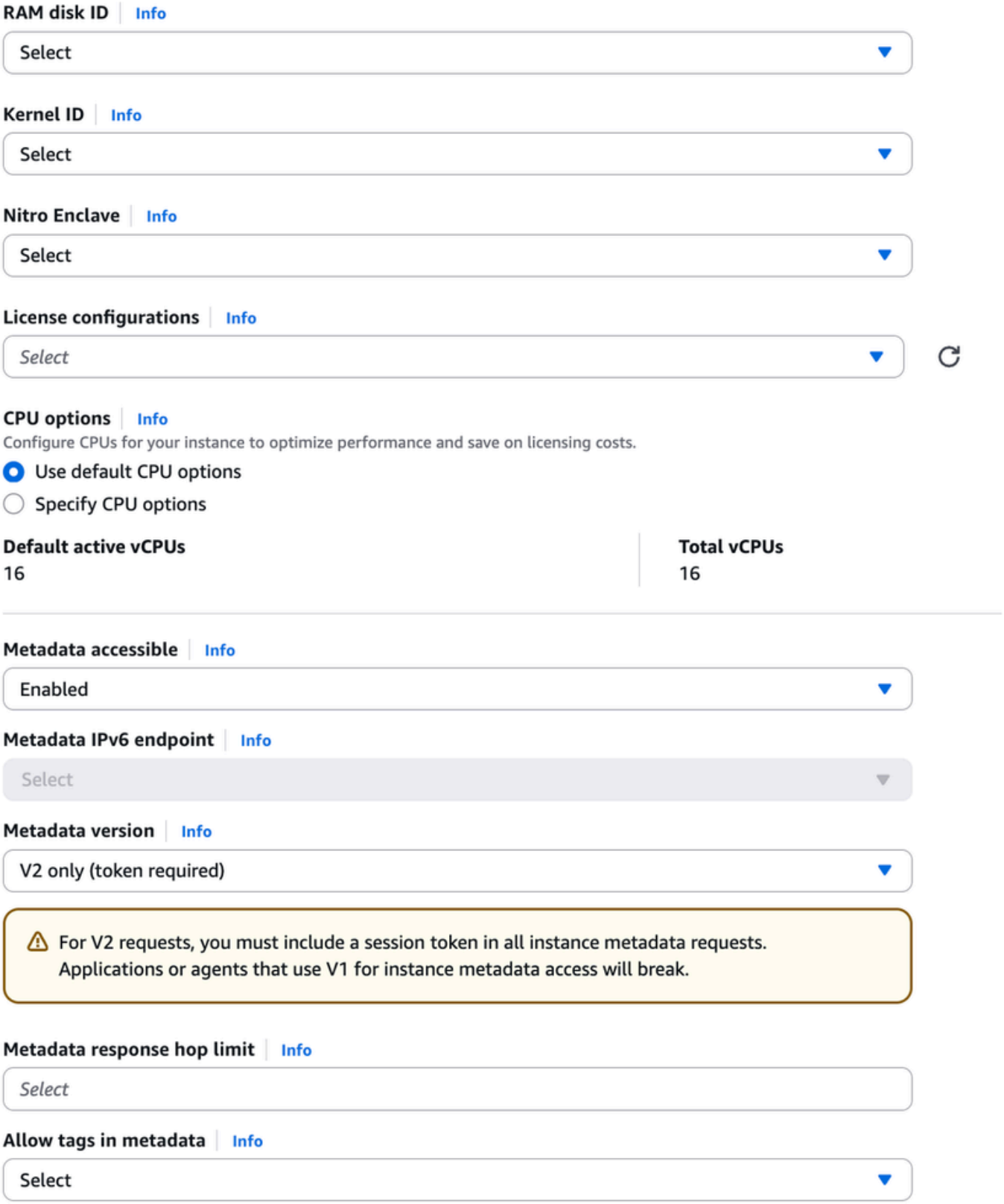
Tenancy | Info

Dedicated - run a dedicated instance ▼

Additional charges apply

12. In the **Metadata version** section:

- For **ISE version 3.4 and above**, choose **V2 only (token required)** — this is the recommended option.
- For **ISE versions earlier than 3.4**, choose **V1 and V2 (token optional)** to ensure compatibility.



13. In the **User data** field, provide the initial **configuration parameters** for the ISE instance, including **hostname**, **DNS**, **NTP server**, **timezone**, **ERS**, and **admin credentials**.

Example:
hostname=varshaahise2

primarynameserver=x.x.x.x

dnsdomain=varshaah.local

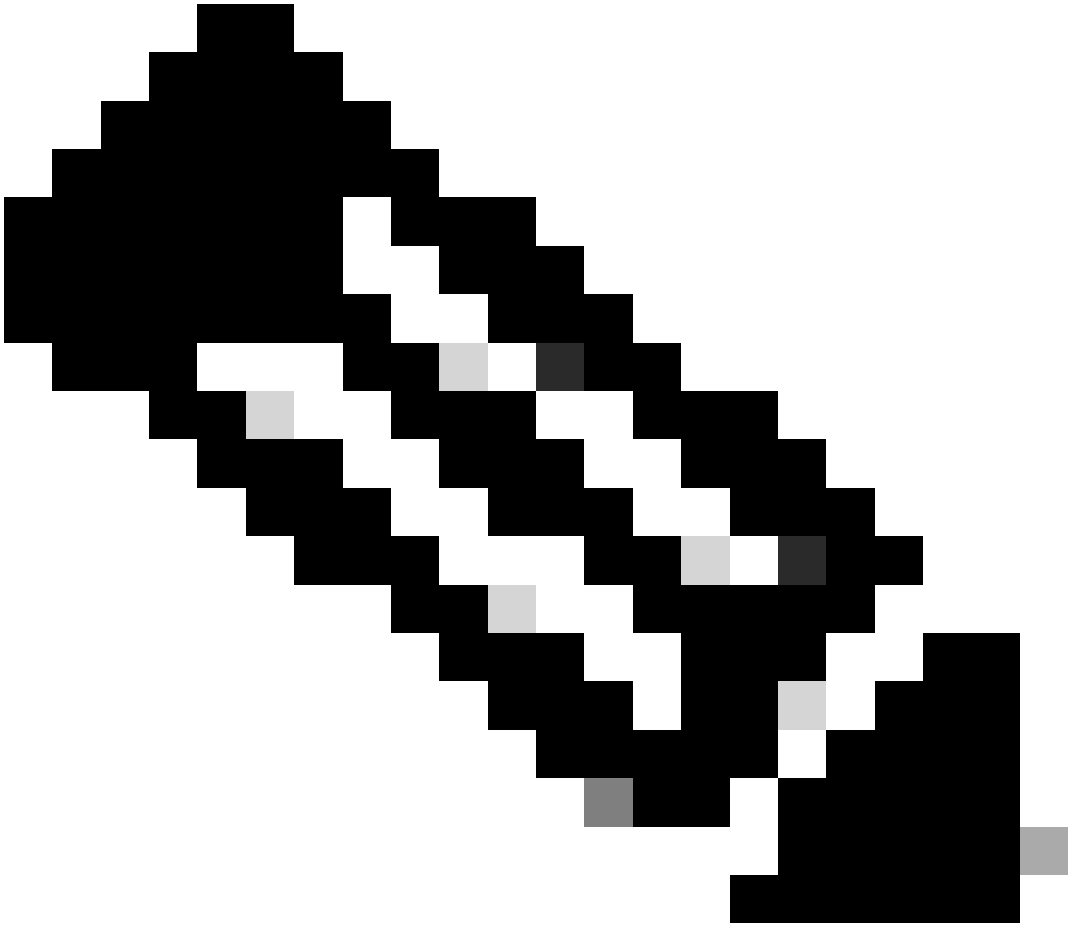
ntpserver=x.x.x.x

timezone=Asia/Kolkata

username=admin

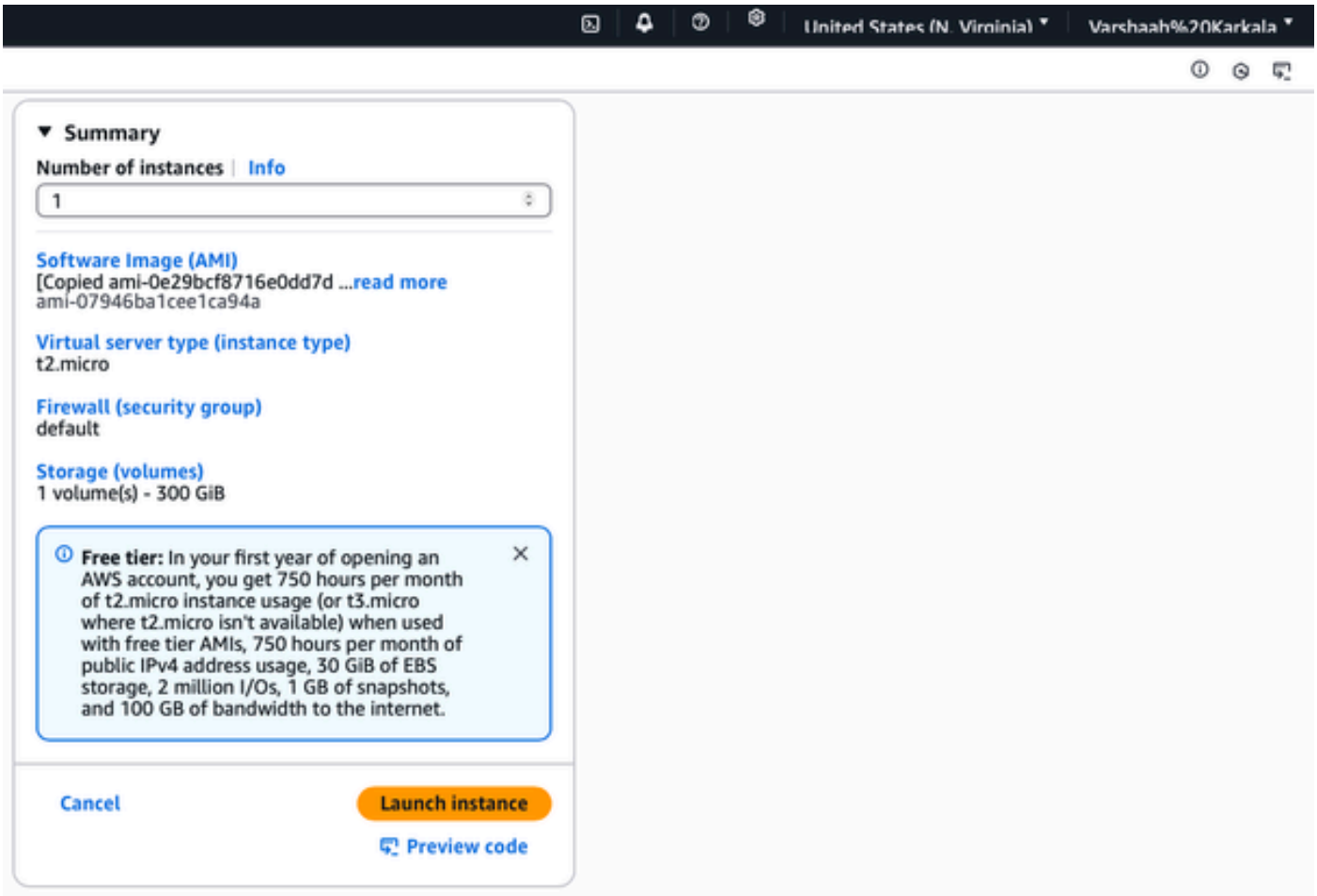
password=Ise@123

ersEnabled=true

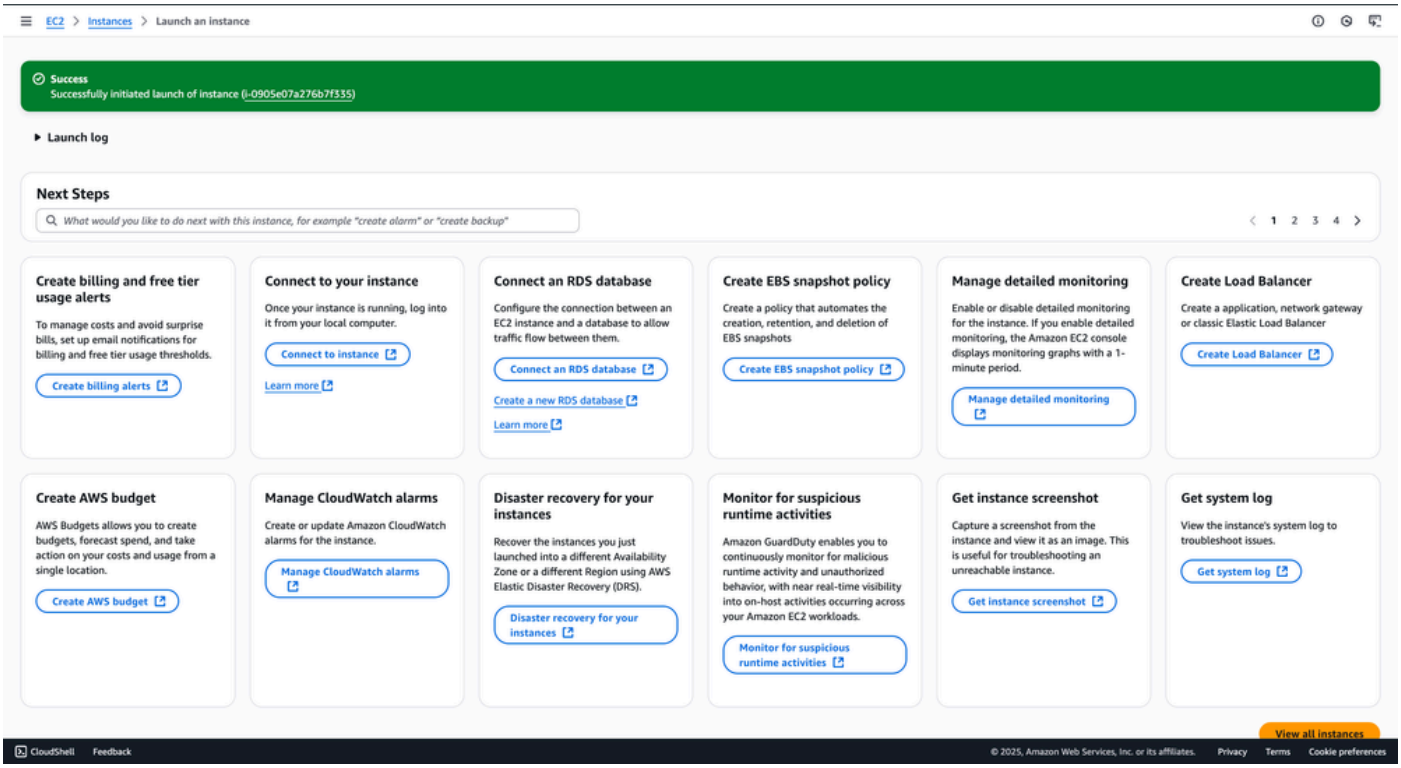


Note: Ensure the password complies with Cisco ISE password policy.

After entering the user data and completing the configuration, click **Launch Instance**.



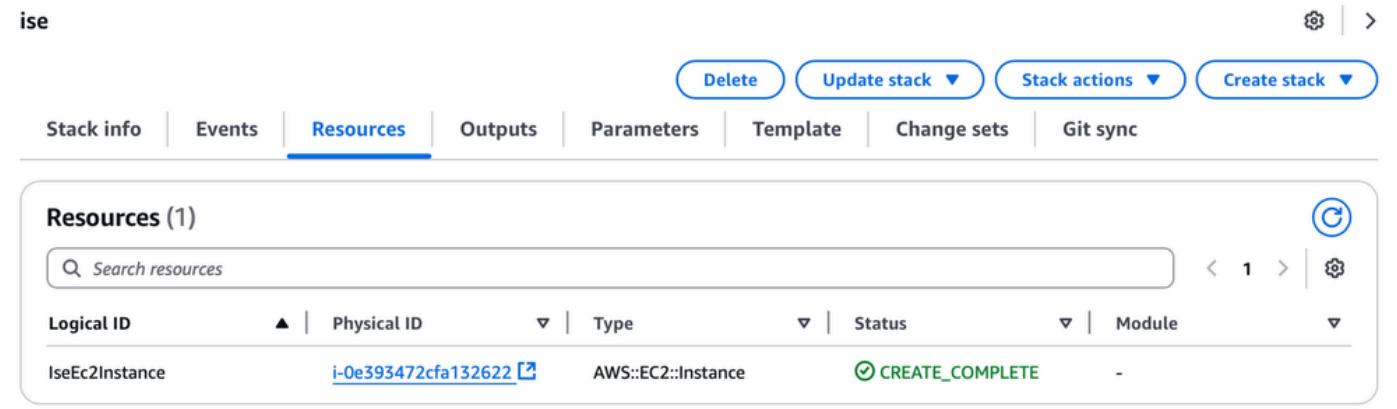
14. After the instance is launched, a confirmation message appears stating: 'Successfully initiated launch of instance <instance_name>'. This indicates that the launch process has started successfully.

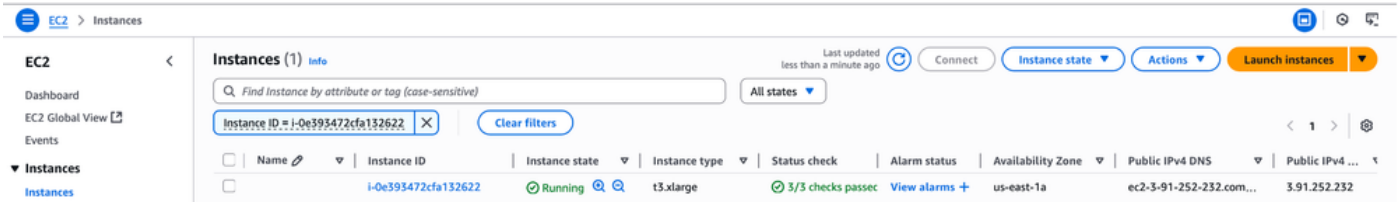


Verify

Access the ISE Instance Built Using CFT

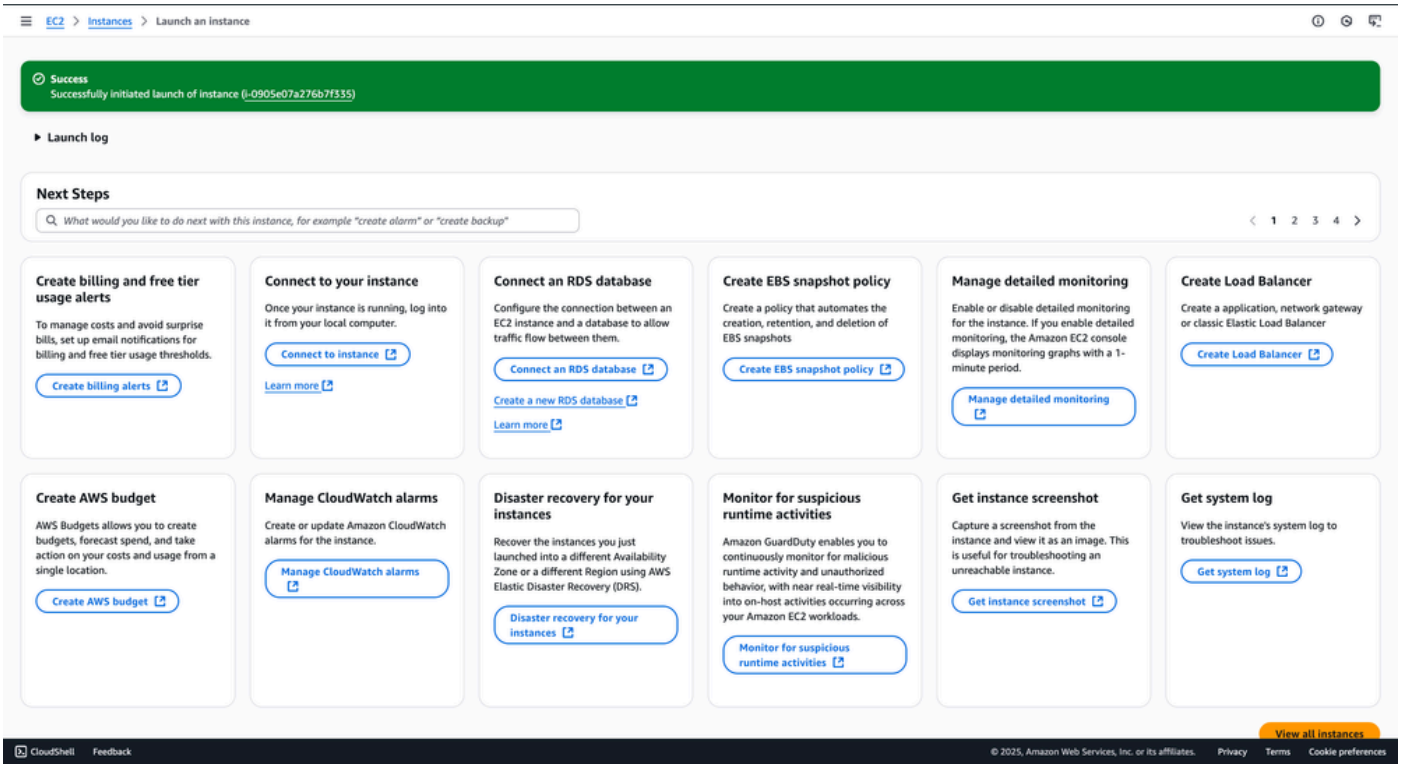
Navigate to the **Resources** tab in your **CloudFormation stack** and click the **Physical ID**. It redirects you to the EC2 dashboard where you are able to see the instance.

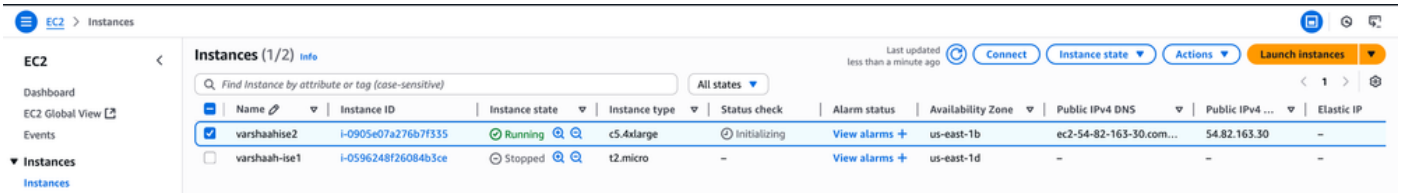




Access the ISE Instance Built Using AMI

Click **View all Instances** to navigate to the EC2 instances page. On this page, verify that the **Status Check** shows as **3/3 checks passed**, indicating that the instance is up and healthy.





Access the ISE GUI

The ISE server is now successfully deployed.

To access the ISE GUI, you need to use the instance's IP address in your browser. Since the default IP is private, it cannot be accessed directly from the internet.

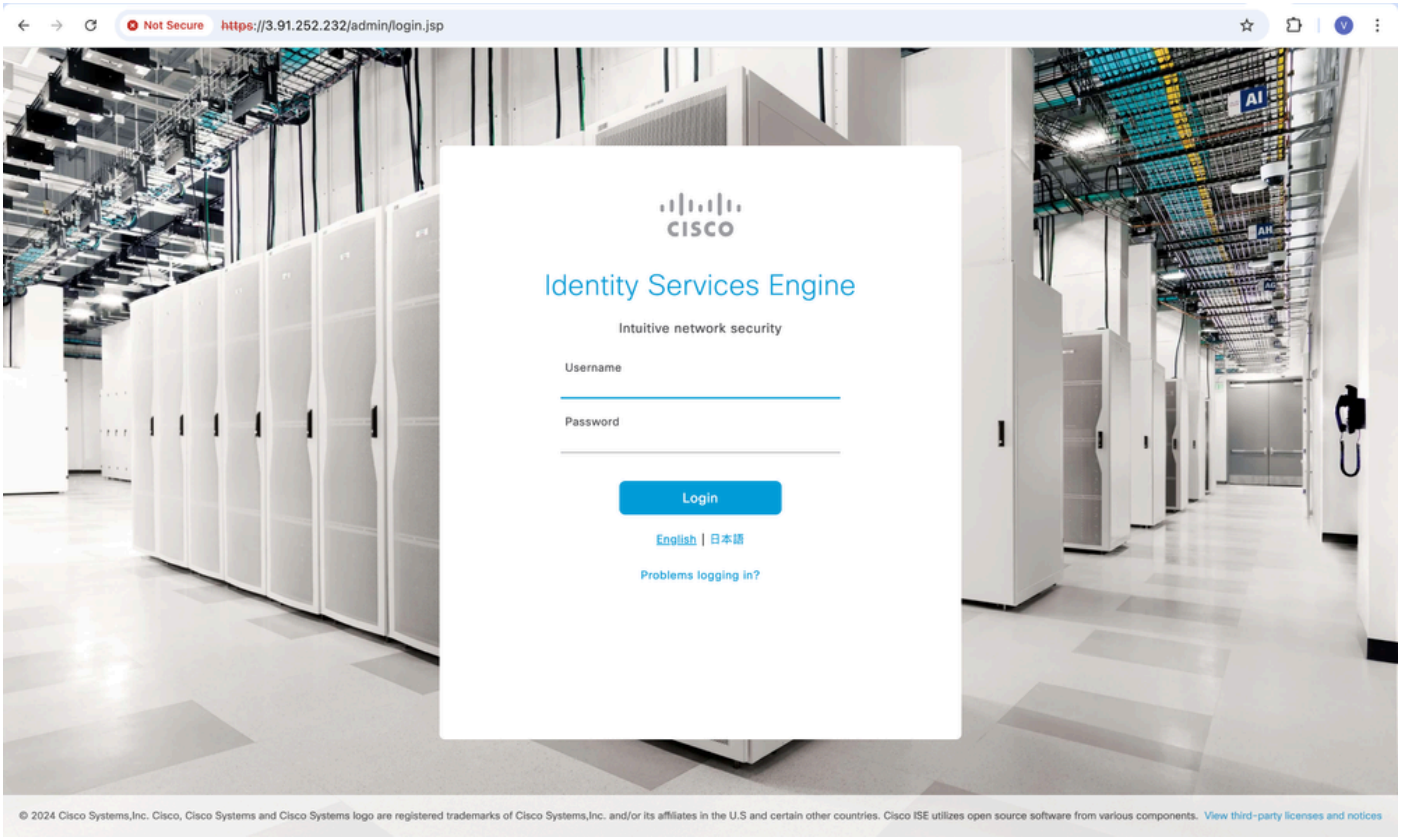
Check if a public IP is associated with the instance:

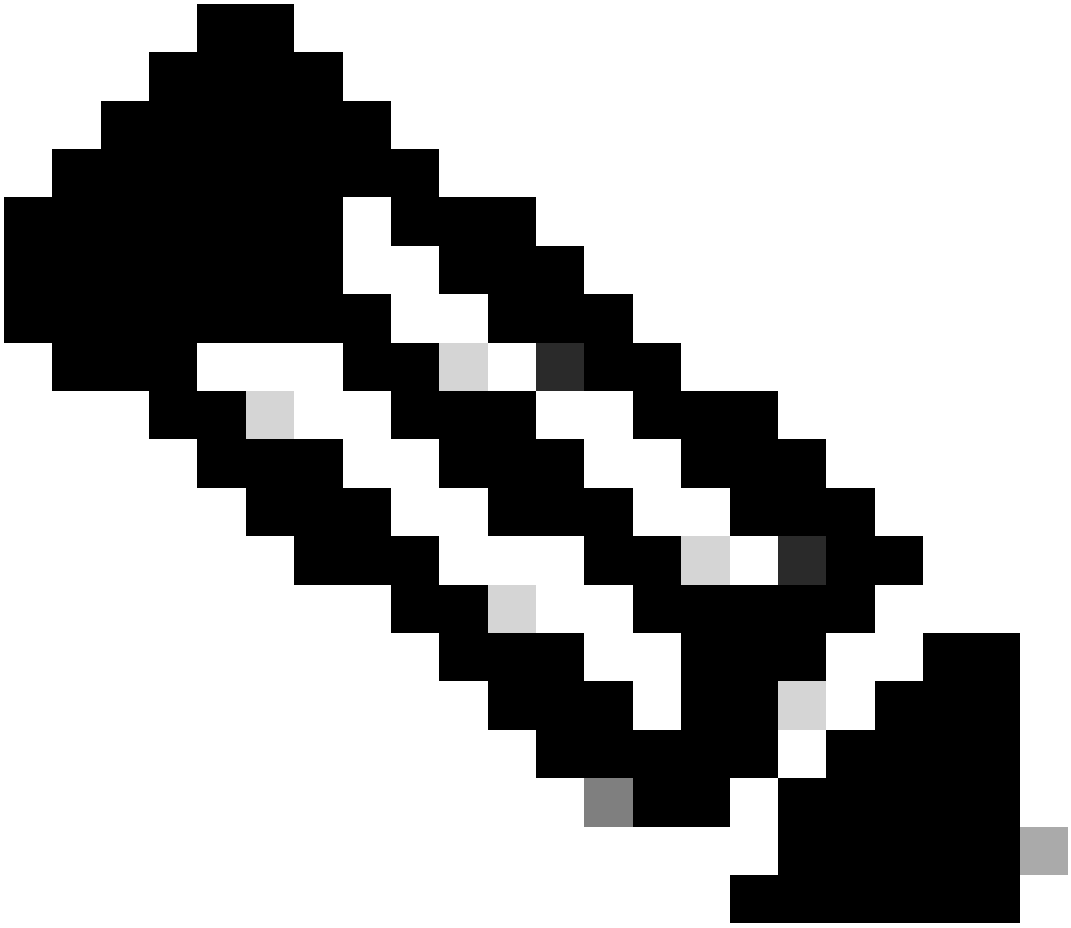
- Navigate to **EC2 > Instances** and select your **instance**.
- Look for the **Public IPv4 address** field.

Here, you can see a public IP address which you can use to access the ISE GUI.

Open a supported **browser** (for example, Chrome or Firefox) and enter the public **IP address**.

The ISE GUI login page appears.


Not Secure
https://3.91.252.232/admin/login.jsp
CISCO
Identity Services Engine
Intuitive network security
Username
Password
Login
English | 日本語
Problems logging in?
© 2024 Cisco Systems,Inc. Cisco, Cisco Systems and Cisco Systems logo are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems,Inc. and/or its affiliates in the U.S and certain other countries. Cisco ISE utilizes open source software from various components. View third-party licenses and notices



Note: After SSH access becomes available, it typically takes an additional 10–15 minutes for ISE services to fully transition to a running state.

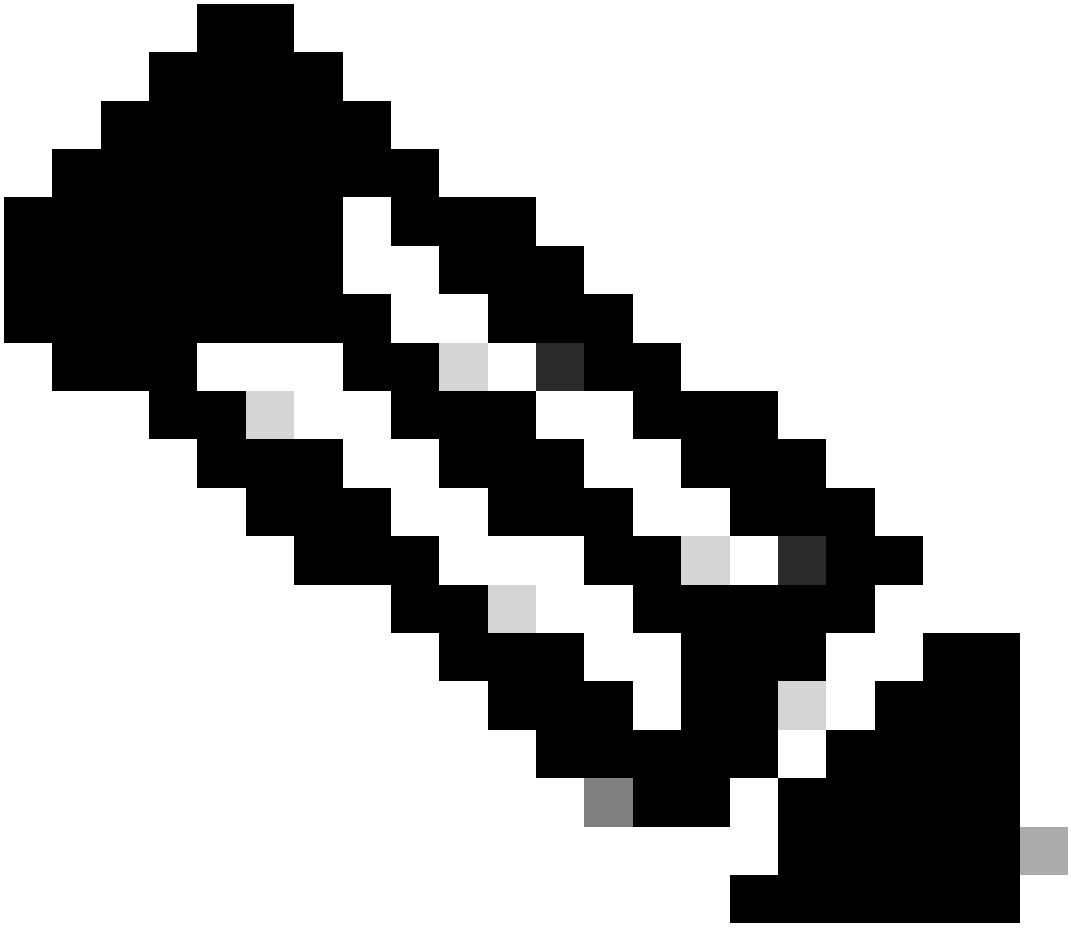
Access CLI via SSH from Terminal

In the EC2 console, select your **instance** and click **Connect**.

Under the **SSH client** tab, follow these steps:

- Navigate to the folder containing your downloaded **.pem** key file.
- Run these commands:

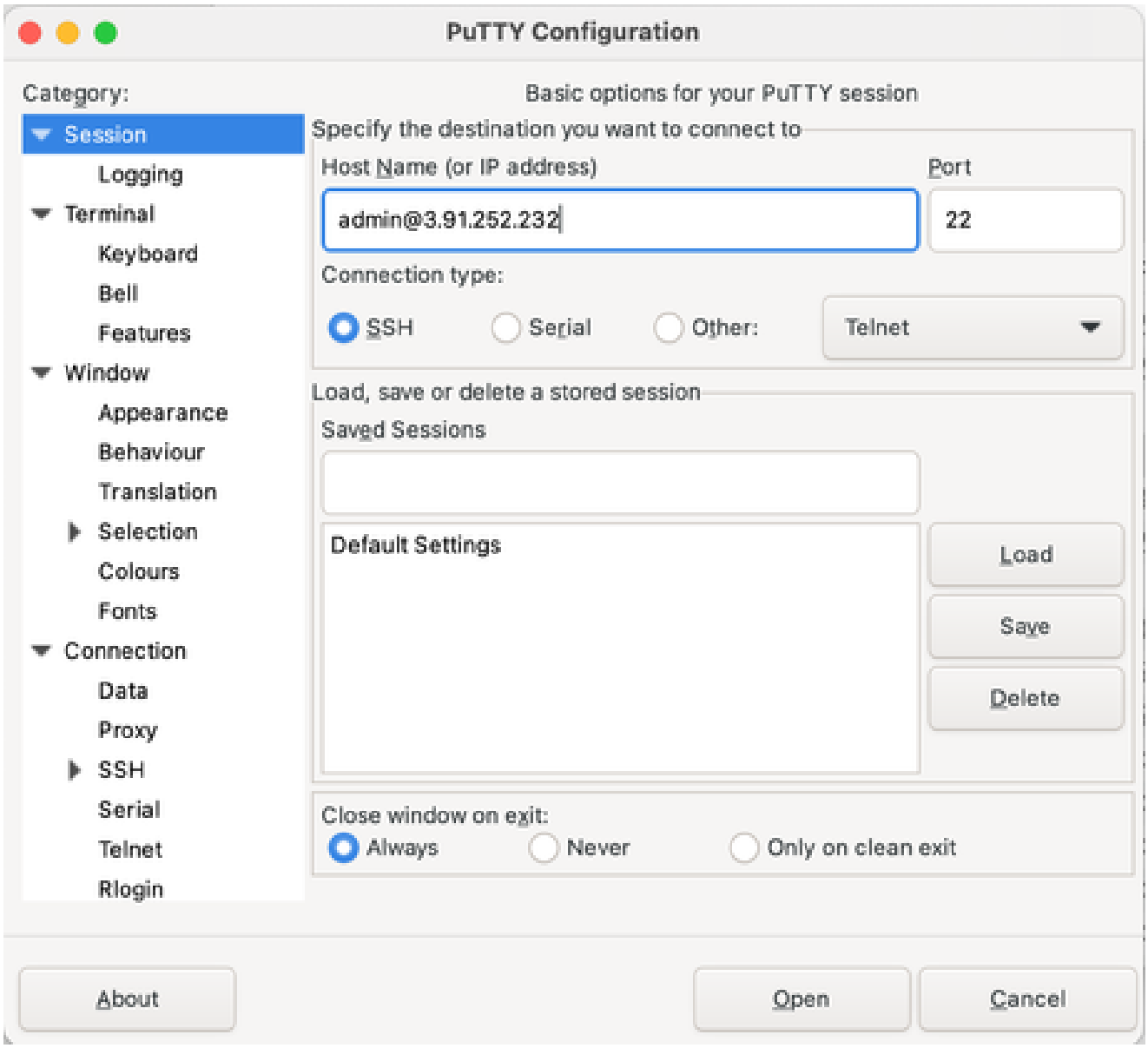
- **cd <path-to-key-file>**
- **chmod 400 <your-key-pair-name>.pem**
- **ssh -i "<your-key-pair-name>.pem" admin@<public-ip-address>**



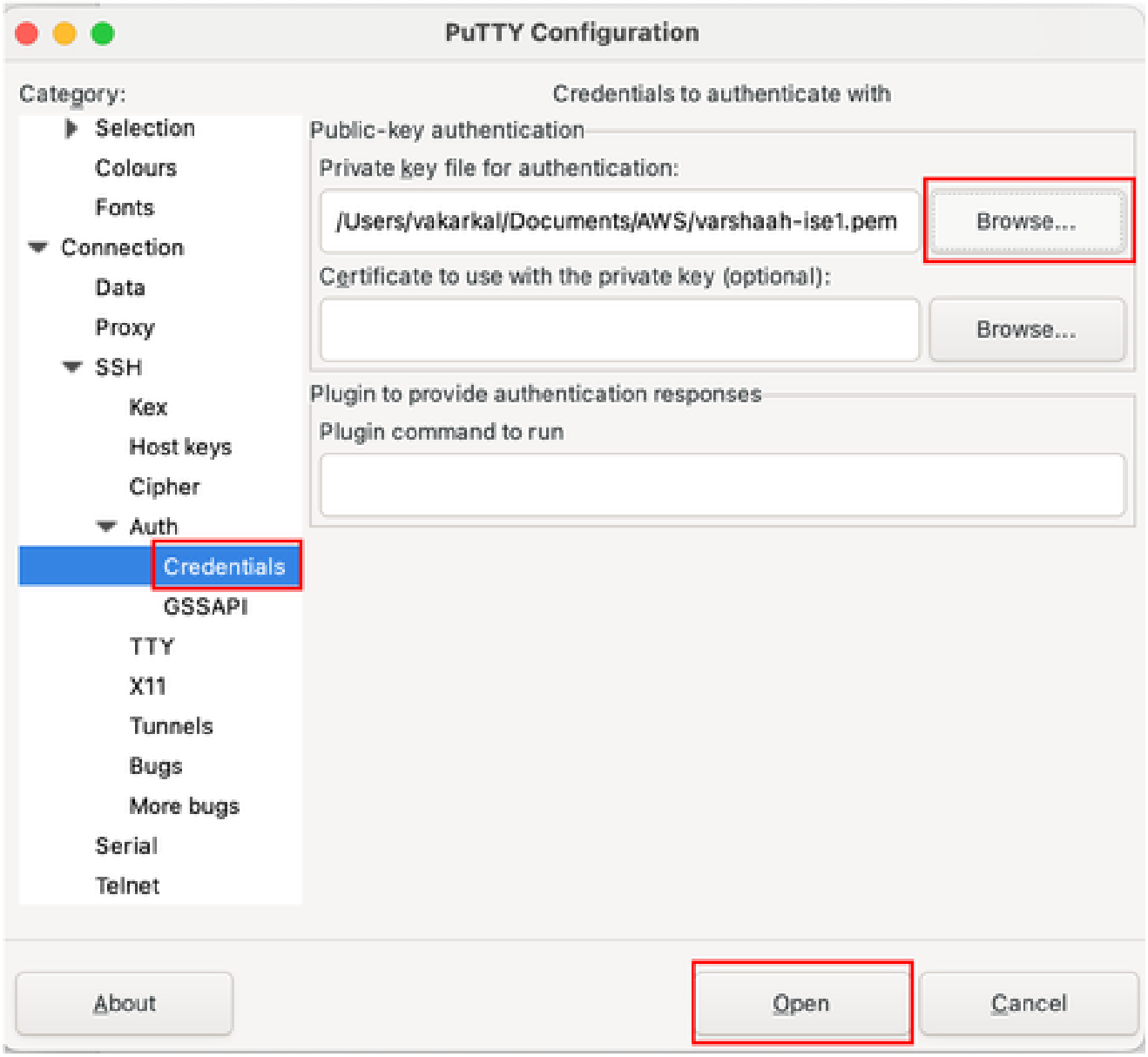
Note: Use admin as the SSH user, since Cisco ISE disables root log in via SSH.

Access CLI via SSH Using PuTTy

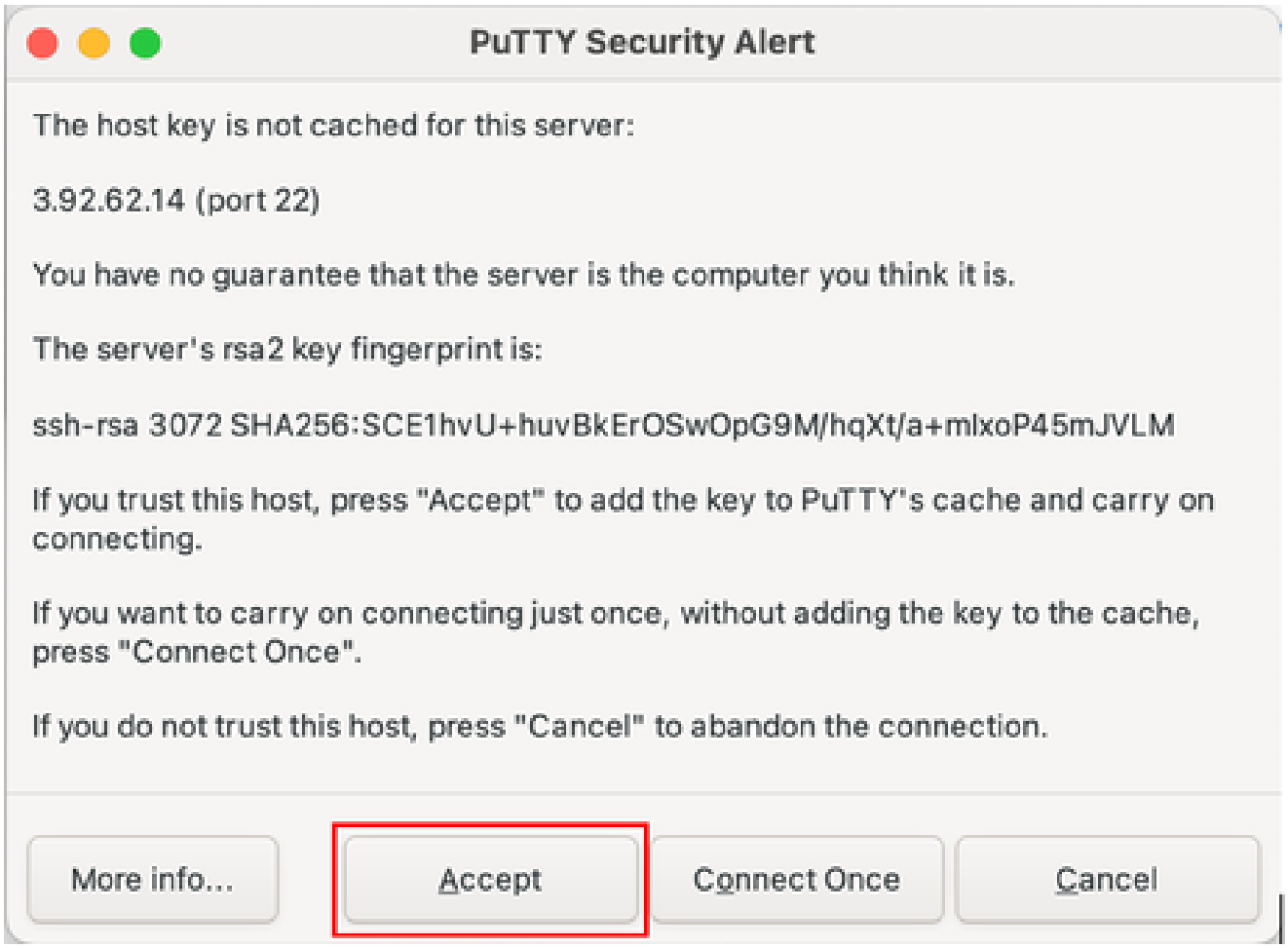
- Open **PuTTY**.
- In the **Host Name** field, enter: **admin@<public-ip-address>**



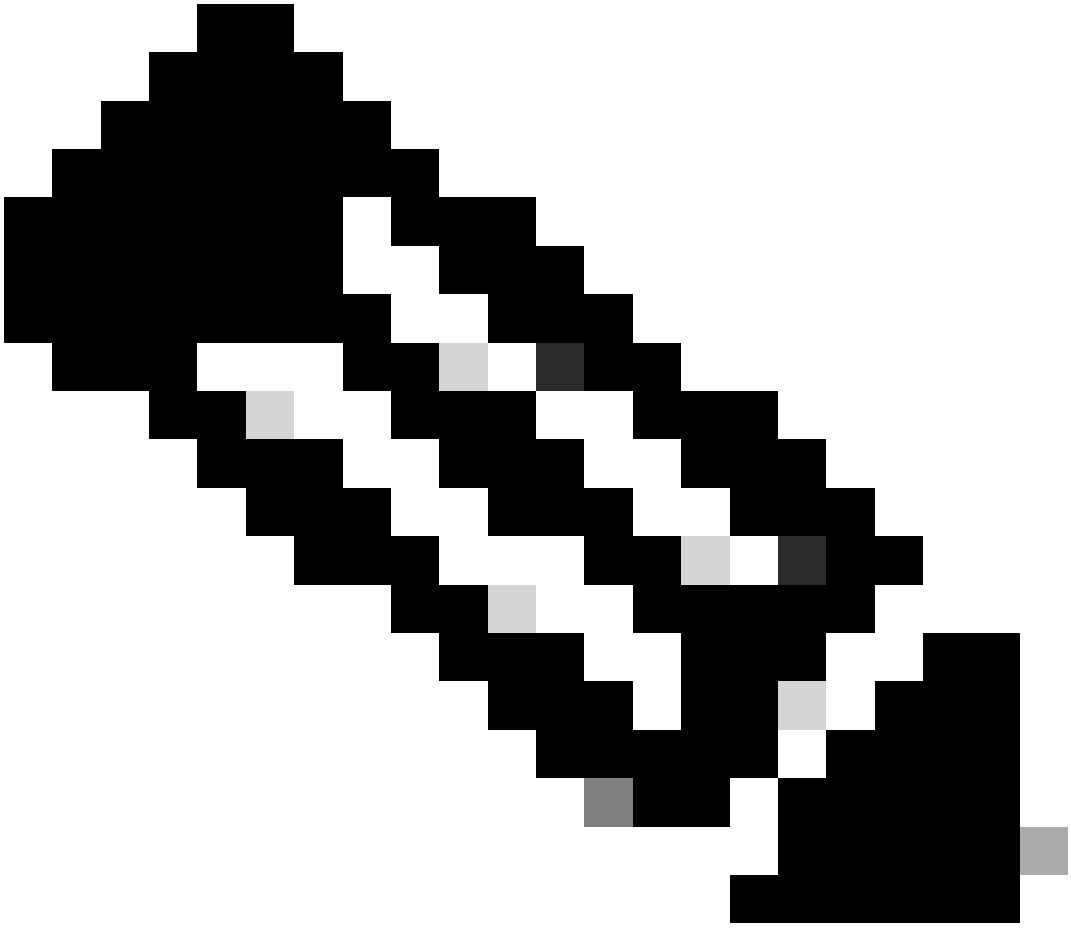
- In the left pane, navigate to **Connection > SSH > Auth > Credentials**.
- Click **Browse** next to **Private key file for authentication**, and select your SSH **private key file**.
- Click **Open** to initiate the session.



- When prompted, click **Accept** to confirm the SSH key.



- Your PuTTY session now connects to the ISE CLI.

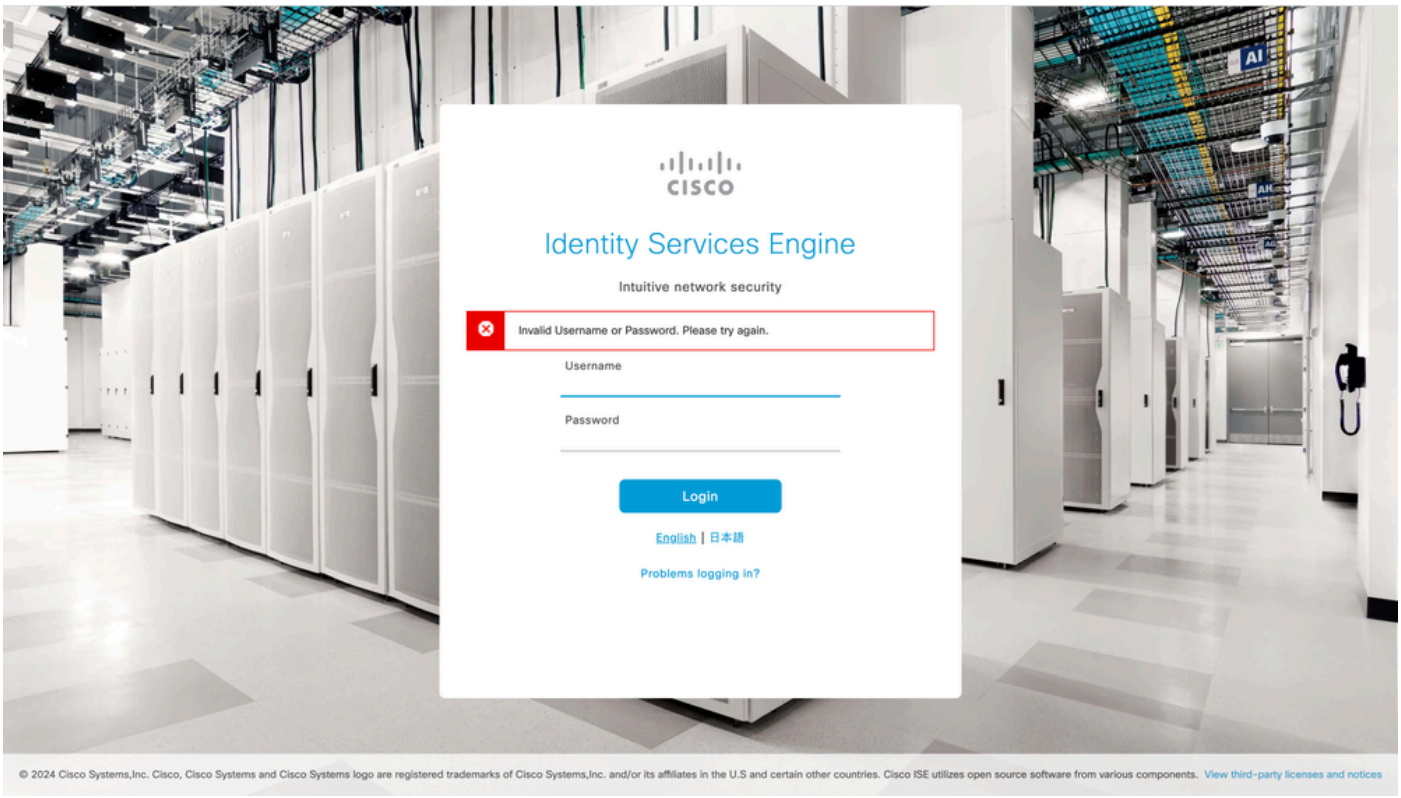


Note: It may take up to 20 minutes for ISE to become accessible via SSH. During this time, connection attempts may fail with the error: "Permission denied (publickey)."

Troubleshoot

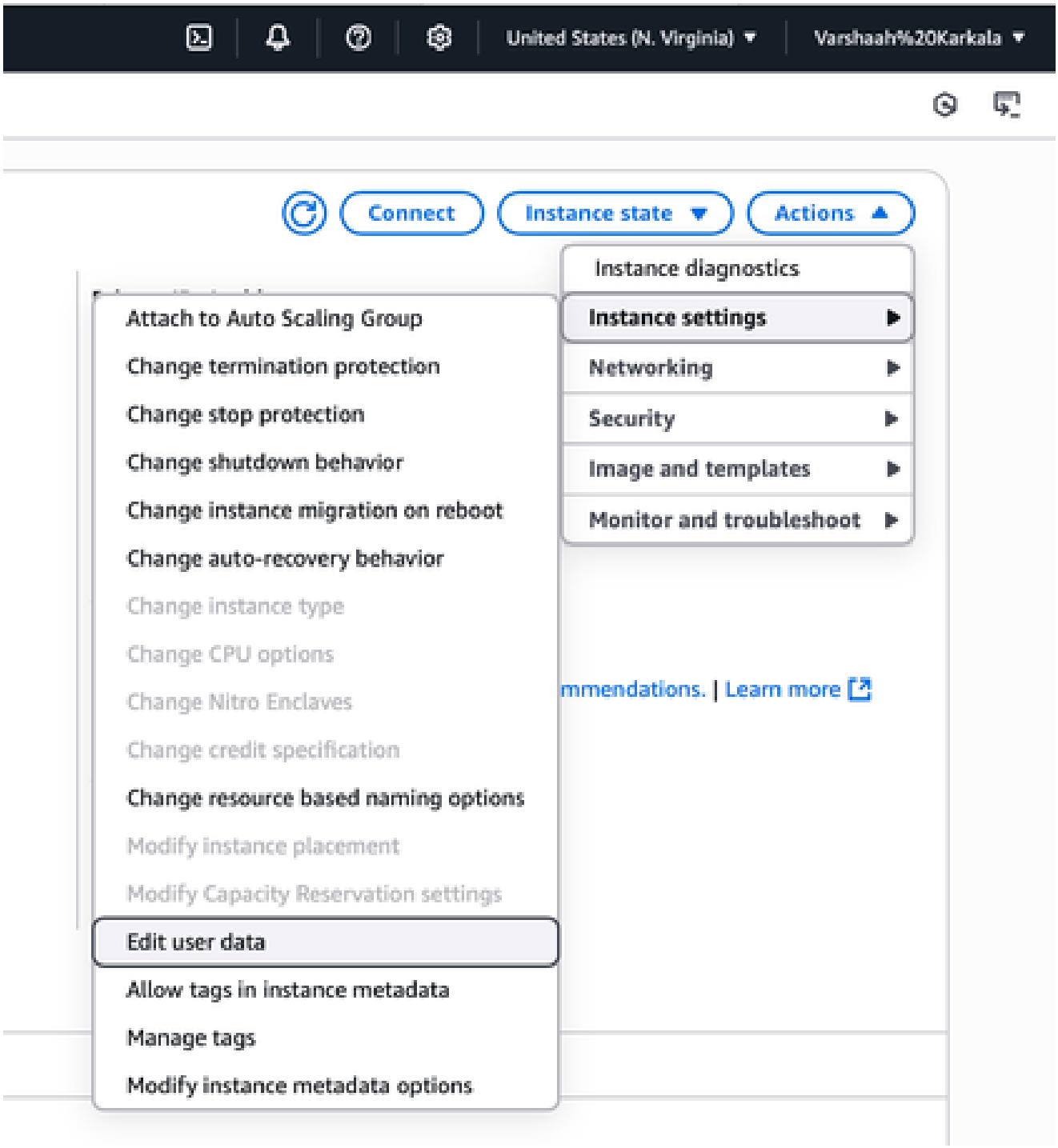
Invalid Username or Password

Authentication issues are often caused by incorrect user input during instance creation. This produces an error message as "Invalid Username or Password. Please try again." error when trying to log in to the GUI.

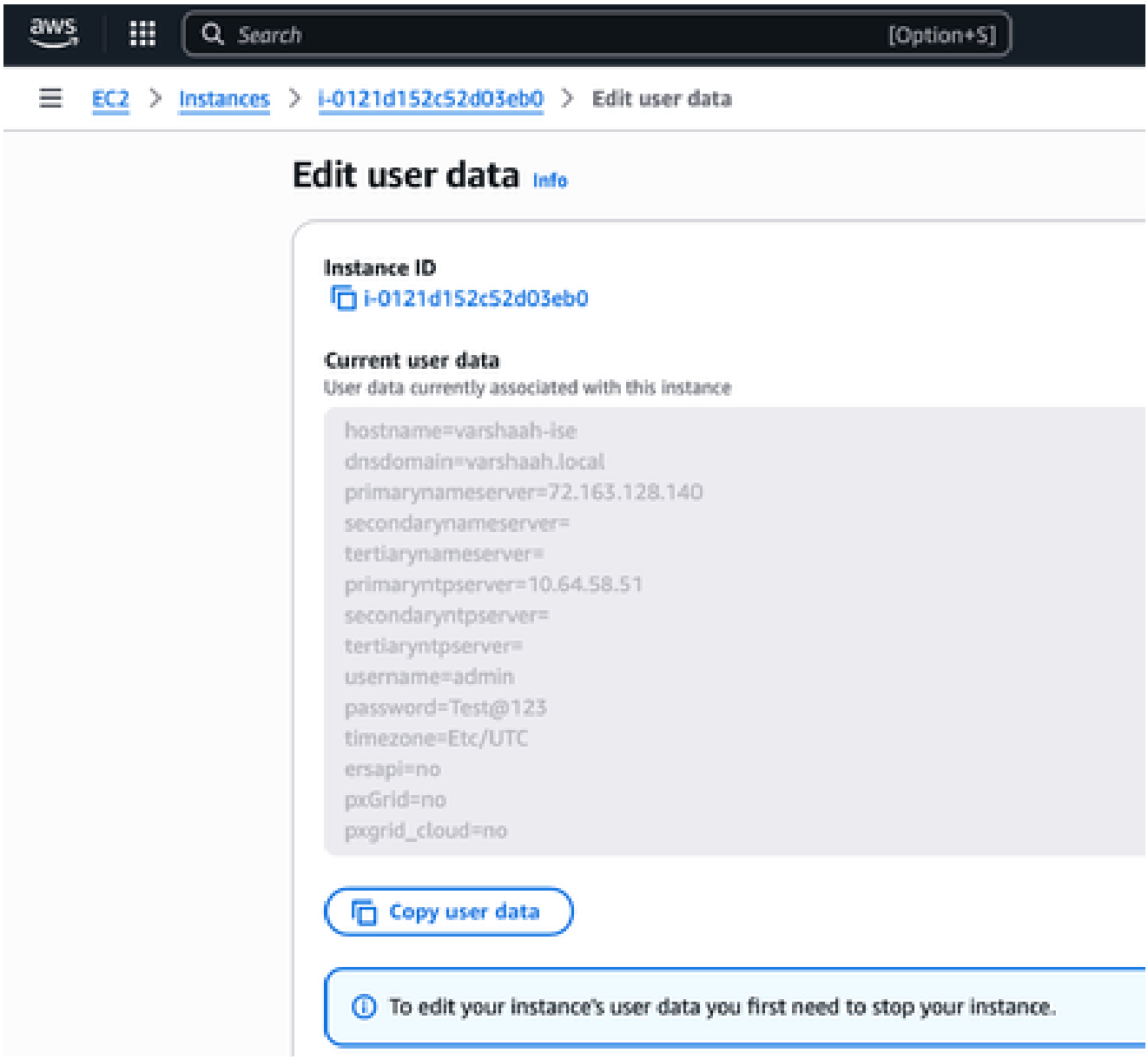


Solution

- In the **AWS EC2 Console,** navigate to **EC2 > Instances > your_instance_id**.
- Click **Actions** and choose **Instance settings > Edit user data**.



- You can find the specific username and password that were set during the instance launch here. These credentials can be used to log in to the ISE GUI.

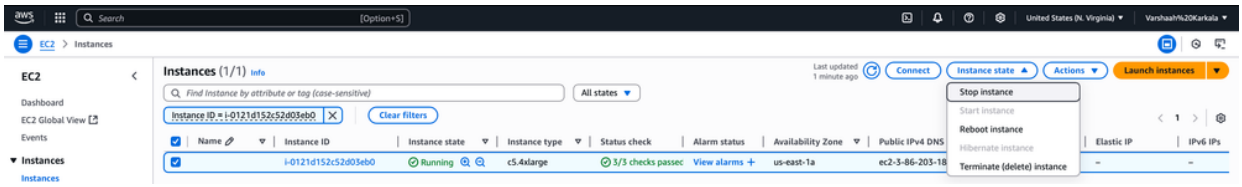


- Verify Hostname and Password when setting up the hostname and password:
  - Hostname
    - Only alphanumeric characters and hyphens (-) are allowed.
    - Must not exceed 19 characters in length.
  - Password
    - Must comply with Cisco ISE password policy.
    - Refer to the official ISE Admin Guide: [ISE 3.4 Password Policy – Cisco Admin Guide]

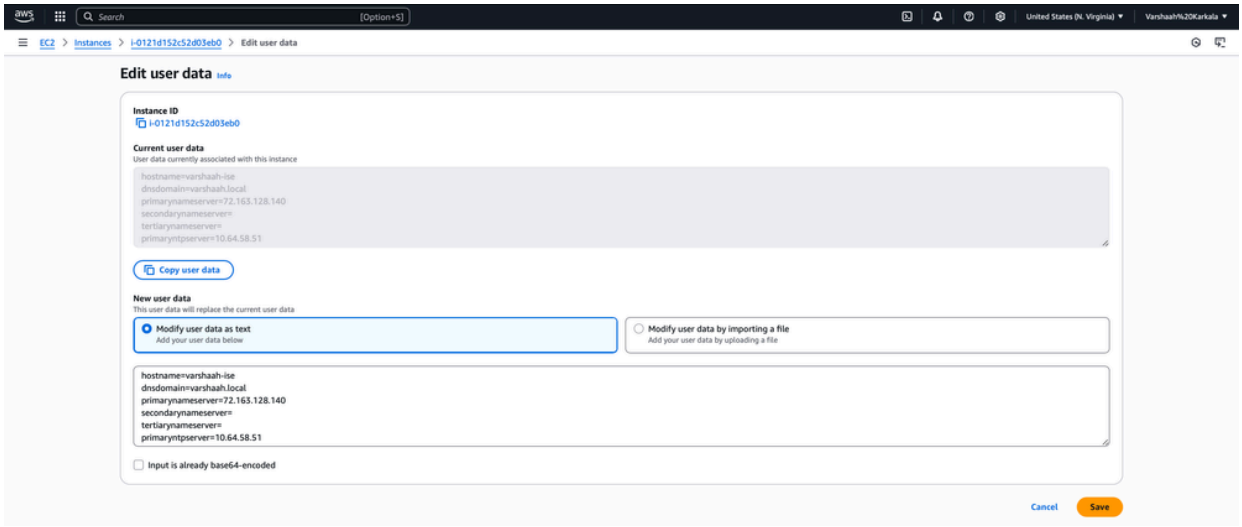
- If the configured password does not meet the ISE password policy, log in attempts fail; even with the correct credentials.

- If you suspect the password was misconfigured, follow these steps to update it:

  1. In the **EC2 Console**, navigate to **EC2 > Instances > your_instance_id**
  2. Click **Instance state > Stop instance**.



  3. After the instance is stopped, click **Actions > Instance settings > Edit user data**.



  4. Modify the **user data script** to update the password accordingly.
  5. Click **Save** to save your changes. Click **Instance state > Start instance** to restart the instance.

Known Defects

Bug ID	Description
Cisco Bug ID 41693	ISE on AWS fails to retrieve user data if the metadata version is set to V2 only. Only IMDSv1 is supported in versions prior to ISE 3.4.