

2nd April JASMIN Cloud Migration Update

Dear DataLabs users,

As some of you know, DataLabs is currently hosted on JASMIN, UK's main supercomputer and cloud service for environmental science.

We were notified last week by STFC that there will be non-extension of contract for one of its main service providers by the end of March due to soaring extension costs. This will result in the need to migrate all tenancies on JASMIN to the STFC cloud in the coming months. We will endeavor to make the migration as unnoticeable to users as possible, as we have done previously. Please be assured during this process that your data is securely backed up, and every action will be taken to ensure there is minimal downtime or impact, however there is a remote possibility that DataLabs will be unavailable for a period of time.

At this time the JASMIN team are assessing how best to complete the process while simultaneously extending short term support. For transparency their announcement is shown below this message. STFC hopes this migration will result in a more stable service with added features in the long term.

We want to reassure users that DataLabs is a core part of UKCEH's Digital Strategy to supportive collaborative science, and we want to ensure moving forward that this is well supported and extended with new features that the community require.

If you have any concerns or questions, please reach out to the DataLabs team via EDSupport@ceh.ac.uk.

The DataLabs team.

Mail from JASMIN Support

Dear Cloud Tenants,

We recently announced that we were going to be moving to a new platform mid 2025 due to the product we use for the JASMIN Cloud being discontinued. However, during the process of negotiating ongoing support for our current platform for the coming year, we were informed of a significant increase in costs which would not be affordable going forward. This means that we need to expedite our migration plans for the JASMIN Cloud.

We have been in discussions with the STFC Cloud, whose operation has grown significantly in recent years to the point where hosting the JASMIN Cloud would now be an attractive and cost-effective option. We have already determined that external (-U) tenancies could be hosted in the STFC Cloud, fronted by a version of Azimuth (the new portal we were going to move to anyway), so the experience from the user perspective hopefully won't be too different. As with the VIO5 to VIO7 migration, we will not be moving tenants' machines or volumes for them, and the IPs in the new tenancies will not be the same.

STFC Cloud has additional features compared to the current JASMIN Cloud, which should be of interest to JASMIN tenants, including: access to GPUs, a larger capacity with the option for significantly larger VM "flavours", richer documentation, an overall more resilient service, amongst others.

The current timescales are a little uncertain as we need to overcome some technical hurdles in order for JASMIN External Cloud tenants to be able to use the STFC Cloud in the same way that they would the JASMIN Cloud. However, once these are resolved, we will be strongly encouraging tenants to move to the new tenancies as soon as possible in case we have any issues with the current cloud.

We are still pursuing the current vendor to negotiate ongoing support on acceptable terms. While the current platform is already running without formal vendor support, we are not anticipating that it will become unavailable in the next few months, but our view at this point is that it seems unlikely that the vendor will be able to continue to provide support for the current cluster, hence the need to move to the new platform as soon as possible. Therefore, the current cloud should be considered running at risk.

As the new platform on the STFC Cloud becomes available, the current platform will remain available in parallel for some time, but there will be a strong incentive for tenants to move their tenancies to the new platform as soon as possible, and we will help as much as possible with this transition.

To align us with STFC Cloud's policies we will also be strongly encouraging the use of infrastructure-as-code (e.g. Ansible and Terraform) so that tenants are able to easily rebuild and redeploy machines in the event of an issue causing VM loss and to enable better practice around the VM lifecycle (<https://stfc-cloud-docs.readthedocs.io/en/latest/howto/TerraformAnsible.html>, <https://stfc-cloud-docs.readthedocs.io/en/latest/Reference/VMLifecycle.html>). We will also be more strongly enforcing patching policies, to align us with STFC and UKRI patching policies.

We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause. We consider this move overall a good thing which will benefit all involved.

If you have any concerns, please email the JASMIN Helpdesk (support@jasmin.ac.uk).

Kind regards,

JASMIN Team