



# Chelsio Native Network Driver with SR-IOV support for VMware ESXi 6.X

Installation and User's Guide



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## Version History

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## 1. Introduction

Thank you for choosing Chelsio Unified Wire adapters. These high speed, single chip, single firmware cards provide enterprises and datacenters with high performance solutions for various Network and Storage related requirements.

The **Terminator** series of adapters is Chelsio's next generation of highly integrated, hyper-virtualized 1/10/25/40/50/100GbE controllers. The adapters are built around a programmable protocol-processing engine, with full offload of a complete Unified Wire solution comprising NIC, TOE, iWARP RDMA, iSCSI, FCoE and NAT support. It scales to true 100Gb line-rate operation from a single TCP connection to thousands of connections, and allows simultaneous low latency and high bandwidth operation thanks to multiple physical channels through the ASIC.

Ideal for all data, storage and high performance clustering applications, Chelsio adapters enable a unified fabric over a single wire by simultaneously running all unmodified IP sockets, Fibre Channel and InfiniBand applications over Ethernet at line rate.

Designed for deployment in virtualized datacenters, cloud service installations and high performance computing environments, Chelsio adapters bring a new level of performance metrics and functional capabilities to the computer networking industry.

This document describes the installation, use and maintenance of Native Network driver for VMware ESXi and its various components.

### 1.1. Features

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Chelsio's Native Network driver for VMware is developed for Chelsio's Unified Wire family of adapters.

### 1.2. Hardware Requirements

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#### 1.2.1. Supported Adapters

The following are the currently shipping Chelsio adapters that are compatible with Chelsio Native Network driver:

- T62100-CR
- T62100-LP-CR
- T6225-CR
- T580-SO-CR
- T580-LP-CR
- T580-CR
- T540-CR
- T520-SO-CR

- T520-CR
- T520-LL-CR
- T520-BT

### 1.2.2. SR-IOV Requirements

- SR-IOV should be enabled in the BIOS.
- Intel Virtualization Technology for Directed I/O (VT-d) should be enabled in the BIOS.
- PCI Express Slot should be ARI capable.


## 1.3. Software Requirements

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### 1.3.1. ESXi Requirements

The Chelsio Native Network driver has been developed to run on ESXi platforms. Currently the driver is available for the following versions:

- **Host:**
  - ESXi 6.5
  - ESXi 6.0
  - ESXi 6.0 U1
  - ESXi 6.0 U2
- **Virtual Machine (with VFs):**
  - RHEL 7.3, 3.10.0-514.el7
  - RHEL 7.2, 3.10.0-327.el7
  - RHEL 6.8, 2.6.32-642.el6
  - RHEL 6.7, 2.6.32-573.el6
  - SLES 12 SP2, 4.4.21-69-default
  - SLES 12 SP1, 3.12.49-11-default
  - SLES 11 SP4, 3.0.101-63-default
  - Ubuntu 16.04.1, 4.4.0-31-generic
  - Ubuntu 14.04.4, 4.2.0-27-generic
  - Kernel.org linux-4.9
  - Kernel.org linux-4.8

 **Note** *Windows Guest is not supported with SR-IOV.*

## 1.4. Package Contents

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The Chelsio Native Network driver package consists of the following files/directories:

- **cxl-\*.vib:** Driver VIB file required for installation.

- **docs:** This directory contains support documents - README, Release Notes and User's Guide (this document) for the software.
- **EULA:** Chelsio's End User License Agreement.

## 2. Hardware Installation

Follow these steps to install Chelsio Adapter in your system:

- i. Shutdown/power off your system.
- ii. Power off all remaining peripherals attached to your system.
- iii. Unpack the Chelsio adapter and place it on an anti-static surface.
- iv. Remove the system case cover according to the system manufacturer's instructions.
- v. Remove the PCI filler plate from the slot where you will install the Ethernet adapter.
- vi. For maximum performance, it is highly recommended to install the adapter into a PCIe x8/x16 slot.
- vii. Holding the Chelsio adapter by the edges, align the edge connector with the PCI connector on the motherboard. Apply even pressure on both edges until the card is firmly seated. It may be necessary to remove the transceiver modules prior to inserting the adapter.
- viii. Secure the Chelsio adapter with a screw, or other securing mechanism, as described by the system manufacturer's instructions. Replace the case cover.
- ix. After securing the card, ensure that the card is still fully seated in the PCIe x8/x16 slot as sometimes the process of securing the card causes the card to become unseated.
- x. Connect a fiber/twinax cable, multi-mode for short range (SR) optics or single-mode for long range (LR) optics, to the Ethernet adapter or regular Ethernet cable for the 1Gb Ethernet adapter.
- xi. Power on your system.
- xii. Verify if the adapter was installed successfully by using the `lspci` command


```
[root@host:~] lspci | grep -i Chelsio
0000:04:00.0 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR Unified
Wire Ethernet Controller
0000:04:00.1 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR Unified
Wire Ethernet Controller
0000:04:00.2 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR Unified
Wire Ethernet Controller
0000:04:00.3 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR Unified
Wire Ethernet Controller
0000:04:00.4 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR Unified
Wire Ethernet Controller
0000:04:00.5 Mass storage controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR
Unified Wire Storage Controller
0000:04:00.6 Serial bus controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-CR
Unified Wire Storage Controller
```

For Chelsio adapters, the physical functions are currently assigned as:

- Physical functions 0 - 3: for the SR-IOV functions of the adapter
- Physical function 4: for all NIC functions of the adapter



- Physical function 5: for iSCSI
- Physical function 6: for FCoE
- Physical function 7: Currently not assigned

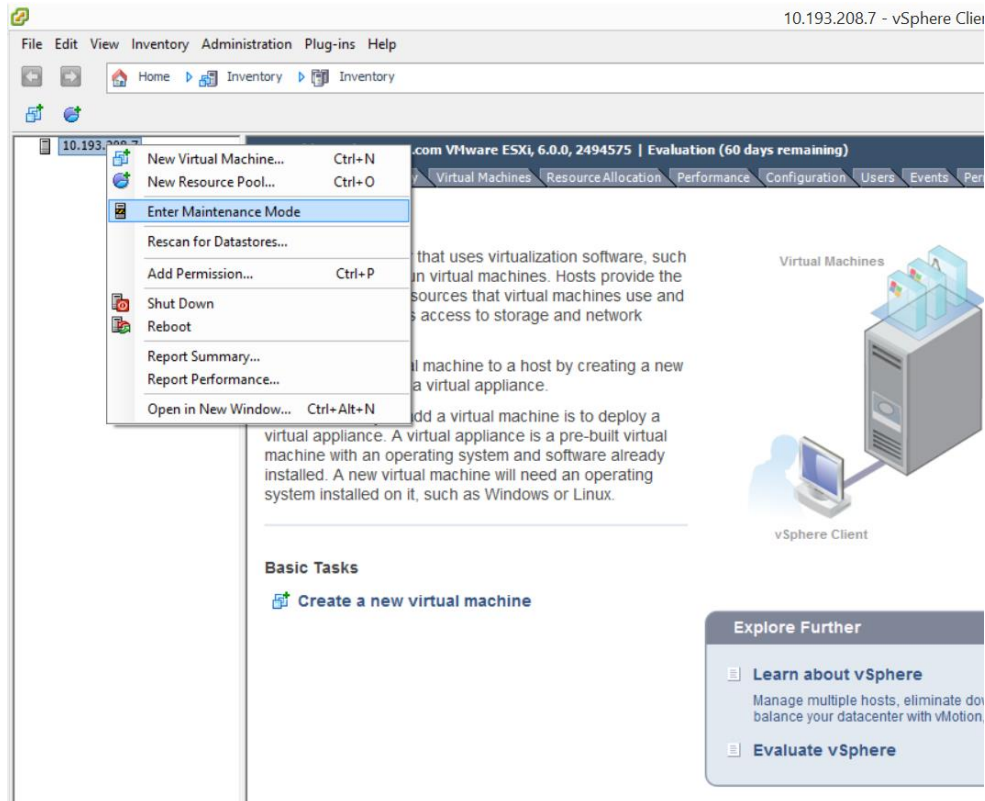
 **Note** *Network device names for Chelsio's physical ports are assigned using the following convention: the port farthest from the motherboard will appear as the first network interface. However, for T5 40G adapters, the association of physical Ethernet ports and their corresponding network device names is opposite. For these adapters, the port nearest to the motherboard will appear as the first network interface.*

## 3. Software/Driver Installation

- i. Download the driver package from Chelsio Download Center, <http://service.chelsio.com>.
- ii. Unzip the driver package:

```
[root@host:~] unzip <driver_package>.zip
```

- iii. Put the host in maintenance mode using the vSphere Client.



- iv. Install the Native Network driver (cxl):

```
[root@host:~] cp cxl-*.vib /productLocker/
[root@host:~] cp cxl-*.vib /var/log/vmware/
[root@host:~] esxcli software vib install -v /productLocker/cxl-*.vib --no-sig-check
```

- v. After installation completes successfully, exit from maintenance mode and reboot the host.

## 4. Software/Driver Loading

After rebooting the ESXi Host, the driver will load automatically. However, it is possible to manually load the driver by using the command below:

```
[root@host:~] vmkload_mod cxl
```

Execute the below command so that device manager performs a rescan:

```
[root@host:~] kill -SIGHUP $(cat /var/run/vmware/vmkdevmgr.pid)
```

## 5. Software/Driver Configuration and Fine-tuning

### 5.1. cxgbtool

The `cxgbtool` command queries or sets various aspects of Chelsio network interface cards. It complements standard tools used to configure network settings and provides functionality not available through such tools. Some of the commands provided can be used to query running statistics to aid in debugging. The tool will be installed by default on installing the driver VIB.

- **Syntax & Usage**

To use `cxgbtool`, use the syntax:

```
[root@host:~] /opt/chelsio/bin/cxgbtool <options>
```

 **Note** For information on available parameters and their usage, refer to `cxgbtool` help by running the `/opt/chelsio/bin/cxgbtool -h` command.

### 5.2. Adapter Configuration

The adapter's configuration should be updated for optimal performance in ESXi environment. Follow the steps mentioned below:

i. Run the following `cxgbtool` command:

```
[root@host:~] /opt/chelsio/bin/cxgbtool -c esxcfg -set
```

 **Note** Not supported on T6 adapters.

ii. Reboot the system for changes to take effect.

### 5.3. Firmware update

The driver will auto-load the firmware if an update is required. The version can be verified using:

```
[root@host:~] /opt/chelsio/bin/cxgbtool -c version
```

## 5.4. Connecting a Virtual Machine

Follow the steps mentioned below to connect Chelsio adapter to a virtual machine:

- i. Create a new virtual switch:

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-vswitch -a vSwitchN
```

- ii. Link a Chelsio adapter to the newly created virtual switch:

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-vswitch -L vmnicN vSwitchN
```

- iii. Create a new port group on the vSwitch:

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-vswitch -A <port group name> vSwitchN
```

- iv. From the vSphere client, right-click on the virtual machine, select the virtual network adapter to be used, and attach the newly created port group.

## 5.5. Tuning vMotion for vSAN

While creating a vSAN you may encounter out of memory issues, resulting in vMotion timing out. To avoid this, follow the steps mentioned below on all ESXi hosts in the vSAN:

- i. Set the low-memory packet heap value to the maximum supported value of 512:

```
[root@host:~] esxcli system settings kernel set -s netPktHeapMaxMBPerGB -v 512
```

- ii. Set the networking packet buffer pool size to the maximum supported value of 200:

```
[root@host:~] esxcli system settings kernel set -s netPktPoolMaxMBPerGB -v 200
```

- iii. Reboot the host.

## iv. Enable maximum RSS queues:

```
[root@host:~] vmkload_mod cxl rss_q=1
```

## 5.6. Virtual Functions (SR-IOV)

### 5.6.1. Instantiate VFs

Follow the steps mentioned below to instantiate virtual functions:

- i. *max\_vfs* is a comma separated module parameter that specifies the maximum number of VFs per port. Load the Native Network driver (cxl) with *max\_vfs* parameter and set it to a non-zero value. In case of multiple adapters, use ',' to separate the number of VFs per adapter:

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-module cxl -s max_vfs=W,X,,Y,Z
```

Where,

W: Number of VFs per port 0 of adapter 0.

X: Number of VFs per port 1 of adapter 0.

Y: Number of VFs per port 0 of adapter 1.

Z: Number of VFs per port 1 of adapter 1.

 **Note** A maximum of 16 VFs can be instantiated per port.

E.g. - To instantiate 3 VFs for port 1 of adapter 0 & 4 VFs for port 0 of adapter 1:

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-module cxl -s max_vfs=0,3,,4,0
```

- ii. Verify *max\_vfs* setting using the *-g* option:

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-module -g cxl
```

E.g. :

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-module -g cxl
cxl enabled = 1 options = 'max_vfs=2,2'
```

- iii. Reboot the ESXi host for changes to take effect.
- iv. Check if VFs were instantiated successfully on the PCI bus by either using the shell prompt (using *lspci*) or vSphere GUI (under *Host > Configuration > Advanced setting*)

```
[root@austen:~] lspci | grep Chelsio
0000:05:00.0 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc. T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [vmnic4]
0000:05:00.1 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc. T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [vmnic5]
0000:05:00.2 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc. T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [vmnic6]
0000:05:00.3 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc. T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [vmnic7]
0000:05:00.4 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller
0000:05:00.5 Mass storage controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Storage Controller
0000:05:00.6 Serial bus controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Storage Controller
0000:05:01.0 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [PF 0.5.0_VF 0]
0000:05:01.1 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [PF 0.5.1_VF 0]
0000:05:01.4 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [PF 0.5.0_VF 1]
0000:05:01.5 Network controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller [PF 0.5.1_VF 1]
```

Warning: Configuring host hardware without special virtualization features for virtual machine passthrough will make it unavailable for use except via dedicating it to a single virtual machine. In particular, configuring a device needed for normal host boot or operation can make normal host boot impossible and may require significant effort to undo. See the online help for more information.

Each listed device is available for direct access by the virtual machines on this host.

Device Name	Vendor Name
0000:05:01.0   Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller	--
0000:05:01.1   Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller	--
0000:05:01.4   Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller	--
0000:05:01.5   Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified Wire Ethernet Controller	--

Device Details

Device Name	--	Vendor Name	--
ID	--	Class ID	--
Device ID	--	Subdevice ID	--
Vendor ID	--	Subvendor ID	--
Function	--	Slot	--
Bus	--		



- Unloading driver when VFs are attached to VMs is not supported by VMware.
- VMs with SRIOV interface might not power on with "out of MSI-X vectors" message in *vmkernel.log*. To resolve this issue, you need to add "*pciPassthru<VF\_ID>.maxMSIXvectors*" parameter to VMs configuration file. Maximum value allowed for this param is 31. It is recommended to set the value according to the following equation:

$$pciPassthru<VF\_ID>.maxMSIXvectors = \langle \text{Number of CPUs in Win VM} \rangle + 2$$

For more information refer to [VMware documentation](#).

- Windows Guest is not supported with SR-IOV.

### 5.6.2. Assigning VFs to VMs

Once the VFs are instantiated successfully, it's time to attach them to the virtual machine. For instructions on how to assign virtual functions to a virtual machine, please refer to VMware's

official [documentation](#).

### 5.6.3. Using VFs in Linux VM

To use the newly attached VFs in a virtual machine, follow the steps mentioned below:

- i. Power-on the Virtual Machine with VF attached to it.

**Note** *The number of vCPUs in the VM should be  $\leq 2$ .*

- ii. Verify that the Chelsio VF shows up in the VM using the `lspci` command. You should see a similar output:

```
[root@host~]# lspci | grep Chelsio
00:08:0 Ethernet controller: Chelsio Communications Inc T580-LP-CR Unified
Wire Ethernet Controller [VF]
```

- iii. Download the latest *Chelsio Unified Wire for Linux* driver package, from Chelsio Download Center, <http://service.chelsio.com/>

- iv. Untar the tarball using the following command:

```
[root@host~]# tar zxvfm ChelsioUwire-x.xx.x.x.tar.gz
```

- v. Change your current working directory to *ChelsioUwire-x.xx.x.x* directory and install the VF driver using the following command:

```
[root@host~]# make vnic_install
```

- vi. Load the VF driver in the VM using the below command:

```
[root@host~]# modprobe cxgb4vf
```

**Note** *To know more about Chelsio Virtual Function driver, please refer Chelsio Unified Wire for Linux User's Guide.*



### 5.6.4. Example

- i. In this example, 2 VFs are instantiated per port, hence a total of 4 VFs instantiated on the host. The host is then rebooted.

```
[root@host:~] esxcfg-module cxl -s max_vfs=2,2  
[root@host:~] reboot
```

- ii. 4 VMs are setup in the following combination:
  - VF0 of PF0 (VF marked with the bus-id <PCISlot.01.0>) is assigned to VM1
  - VF1 of PF0 (VF marked with the bus-id <PCISlot.01.4>) is assigned to VM2
  - VF0 of PF1 (VF marked with the bus-id <PCISlot.01.1>) is assigned to VM3
  - VF1 of PF1 (VF marked with the bus-id <PCISlot.01.5>) is assigned to VM4
- iii. VMs are powered up one after another.
- iv. VF driver (*cxgb4vf*) is installed and loaded in all the VMs.

The above configuration will result in the following connectivity:

- VFs of the same port can communicate with each other. i.e. VM1 can communicate with VM2, and VM3 can communicate with VM4.
- VFs of port 0 (VM1 and VM2) will be able to communicate with any peer connected to port 0 of the network adapter.
- VFs of port 1 (VM3 and VM4) will be able to communicate with any peer connected to port 1 of the network adapter.

## 5.7. VXLAN

Virtual Extensible LAN (VXLAN) is a network virtualization technique that uses overlay encapsulation protocol to provide Ethernet Layer 2 network services with extended scalability and flexibility. VXLAN extends the virtual LAN (VLAN) address space by adding a 24-bit segment ID and increasing the number of available logical networks from 4096 to 16 million, thereby addressing the scalability and network segmentation issues associated with large cloud computing deployments. Furthermore, VXLAN provides a cost effective software-defined networking (SDN) solution for migration of a large number of VMs over large distances using existing hardware and software resources.

The following sections describe the method to setup a VXLAN using Chelsio adapter:

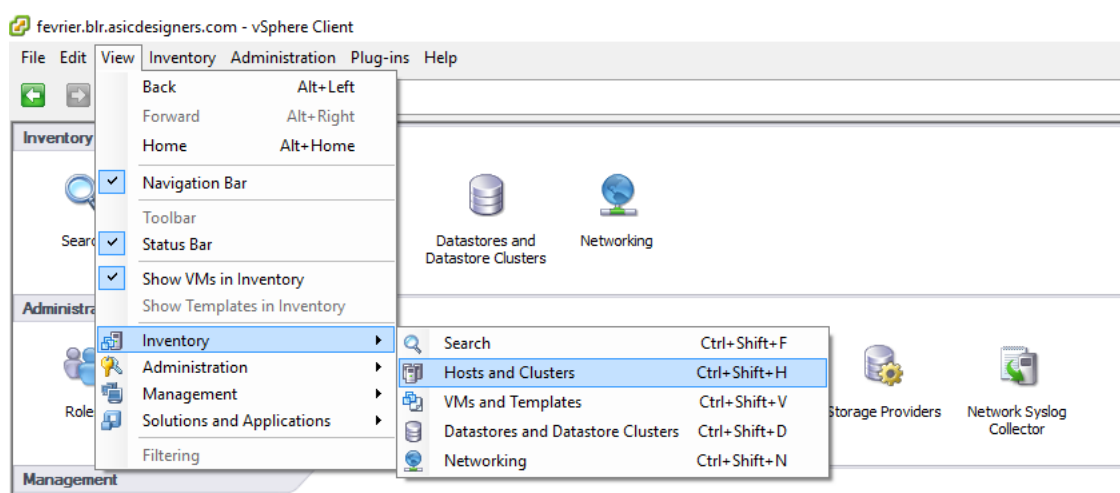
### 5.7.1. Configuring Adapters

VXLAN is enabled by default on loading the driver for T6 adapters. To enable this feature on T5 adapters, run the following command:

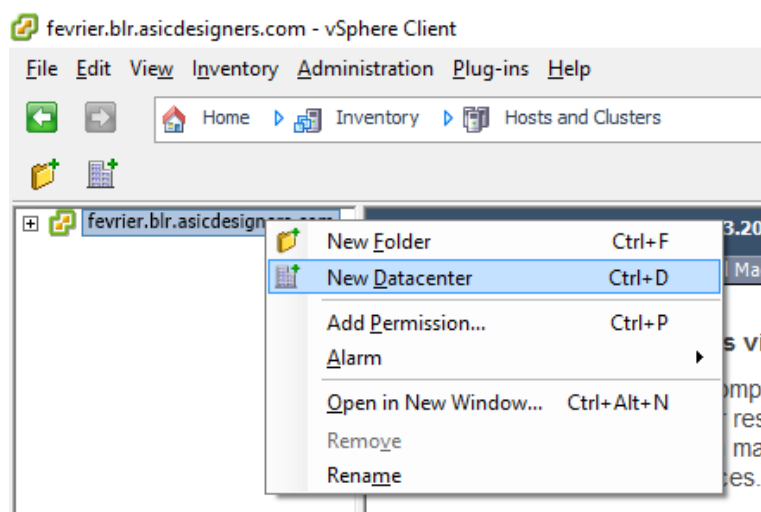
```
[root@host:~] vmkload_mod cxl vxlan_rx_offload=1
```

### 5.7.2. Creating Cluster

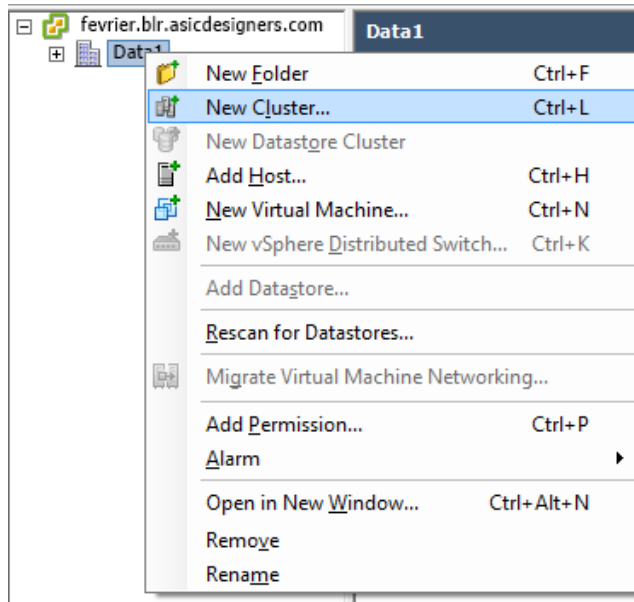
- i. Open a vSphere Client session to a vCenter Server.
- ii. Select **View > Inventory > Hosts and Clusters**.



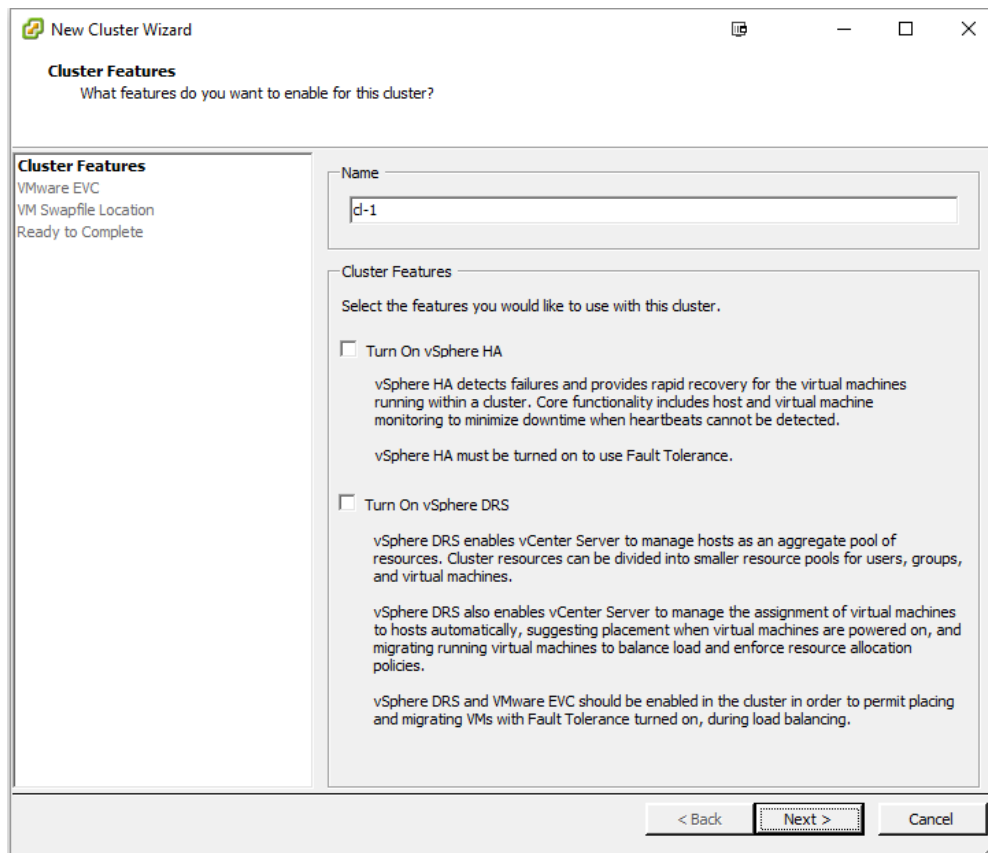
- iii. Right-click on your vCenter Server and select **New Datacenter**. Provide a name for the new datacenter and hit [Enter].



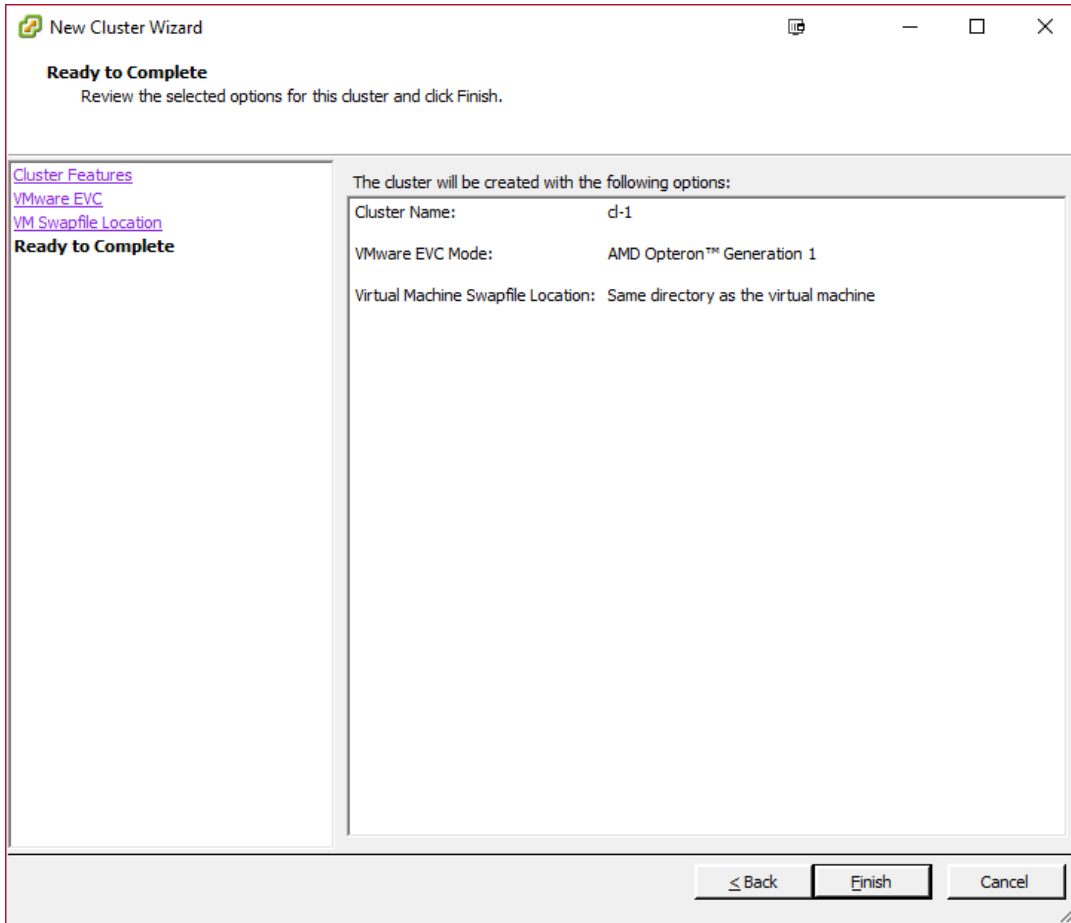
- iv. Right-click on your datacenter and select **New Cluster**.



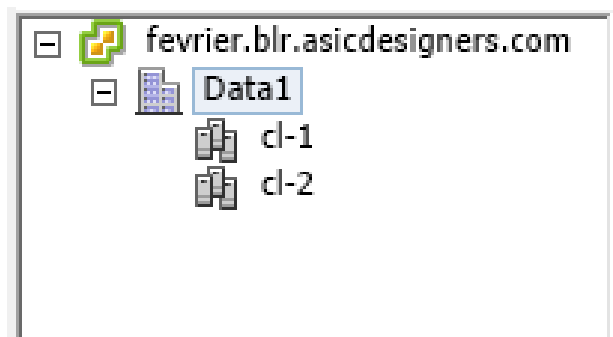
- v. Enter a name for the new cluster and select options for cluster features, Enhanced vMotion Compatibility (EVC) and swap file policy in the subsequent screens.



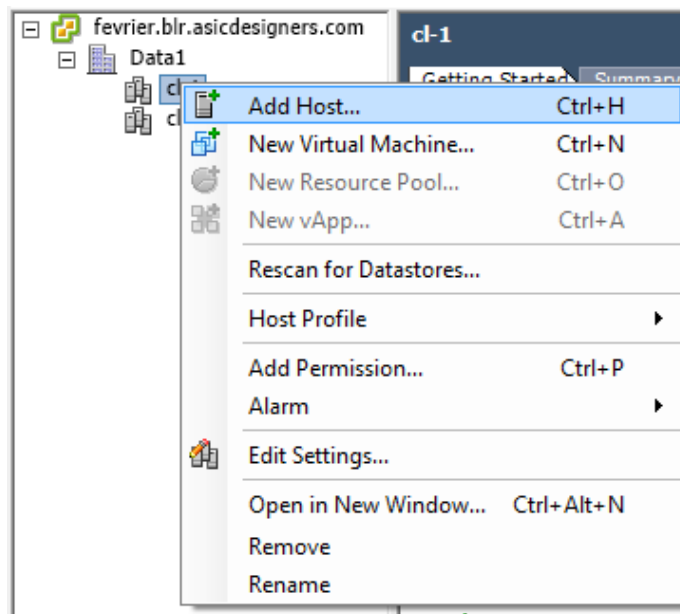
- vi. Review the options selected and click **Finish**.



- vii. The newly created cluster will appear in the inventory. Repeat the above step to add more clusters in the datacenter.

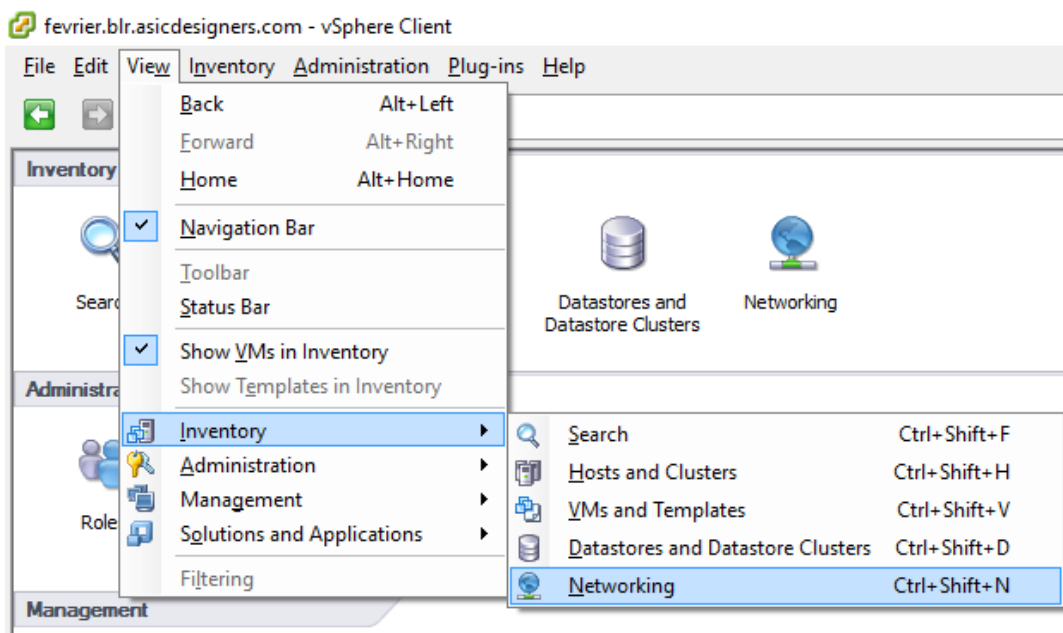


- viii. Right-click on the newly created cluster and select **Add Host**. This will invoke the **Add Host Wizard** allowing you to add host(s) to the newly created cluster.

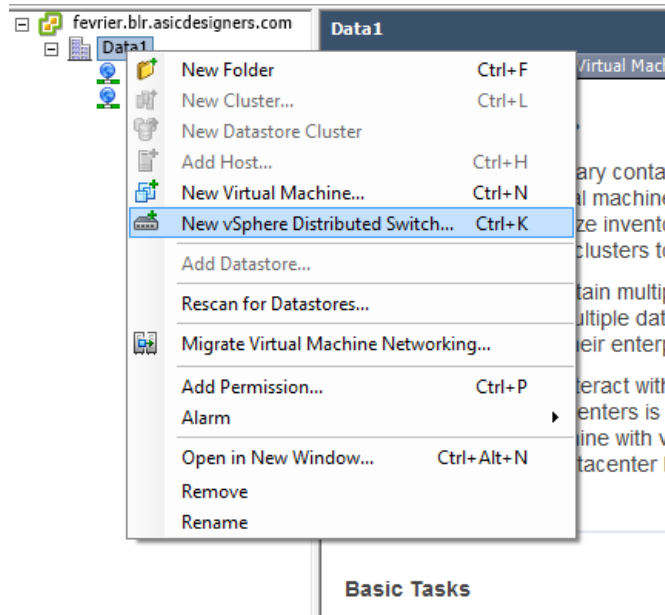


### 5.7.3. Creating Distributed Switch

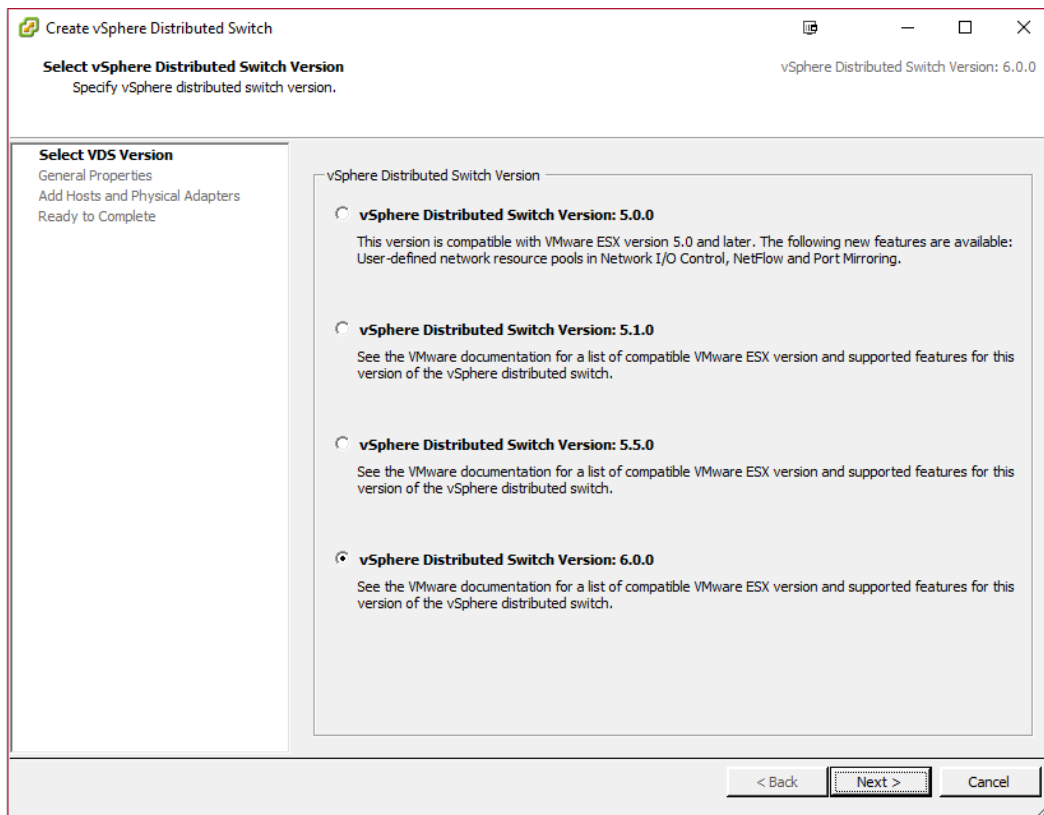
- i. Open a vSphere Client session to a vCenter Server.
- ii. Select **View > Inventory > Networking**



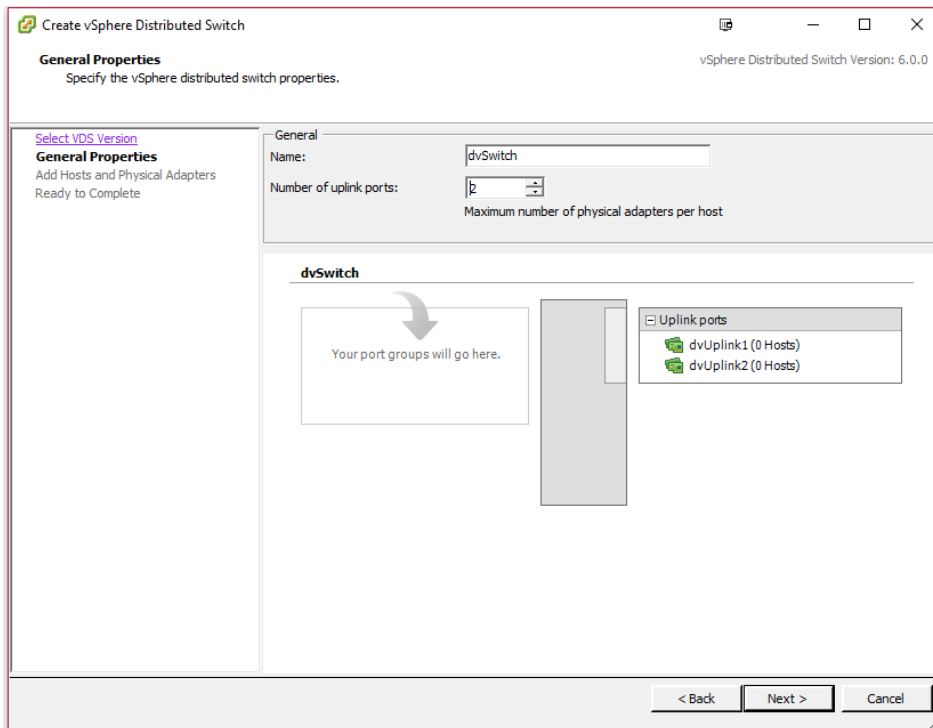
iii. Right-click on your datacenter and select **New vSphere Distributed Switch**.



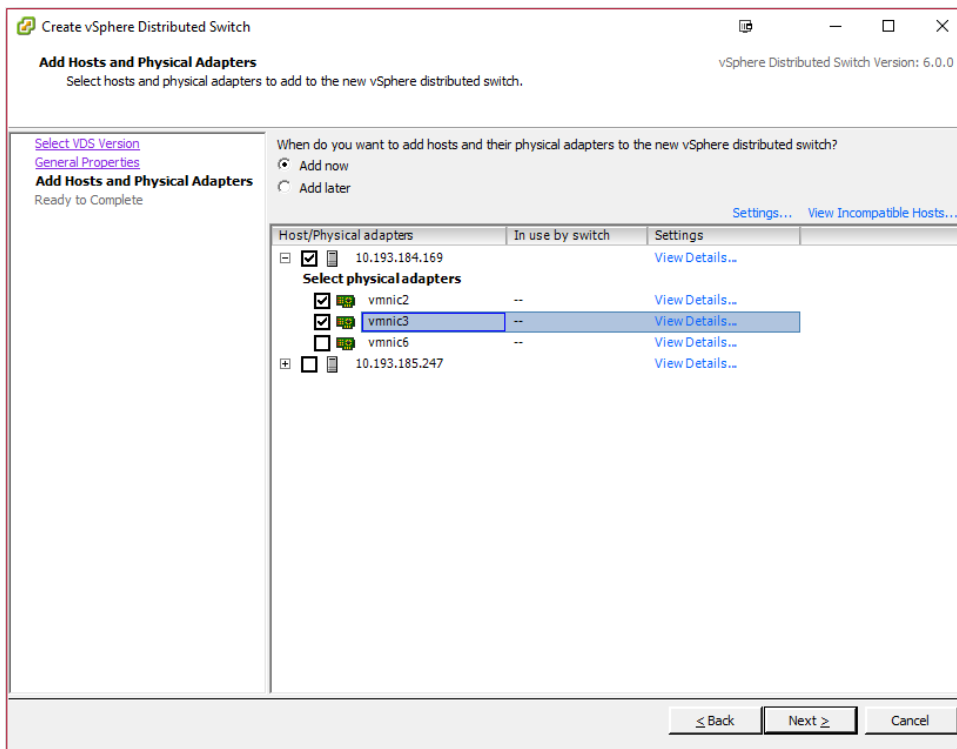
iv. In the setup wizard, select the required switch version and click **Next**.



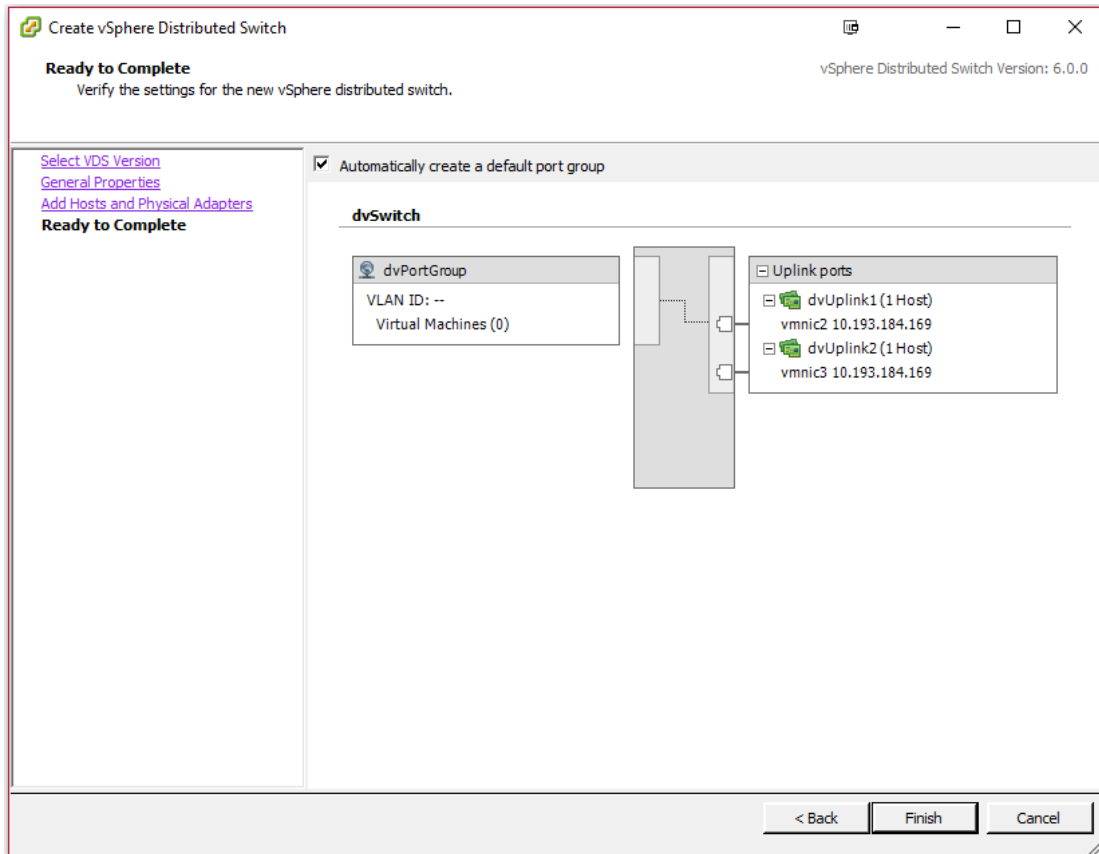
- v. Select the required number of uplinks for your setup. Please note that the number of uplinks must be equal or less than the number of adapters to be used for each host. Click **Next**.



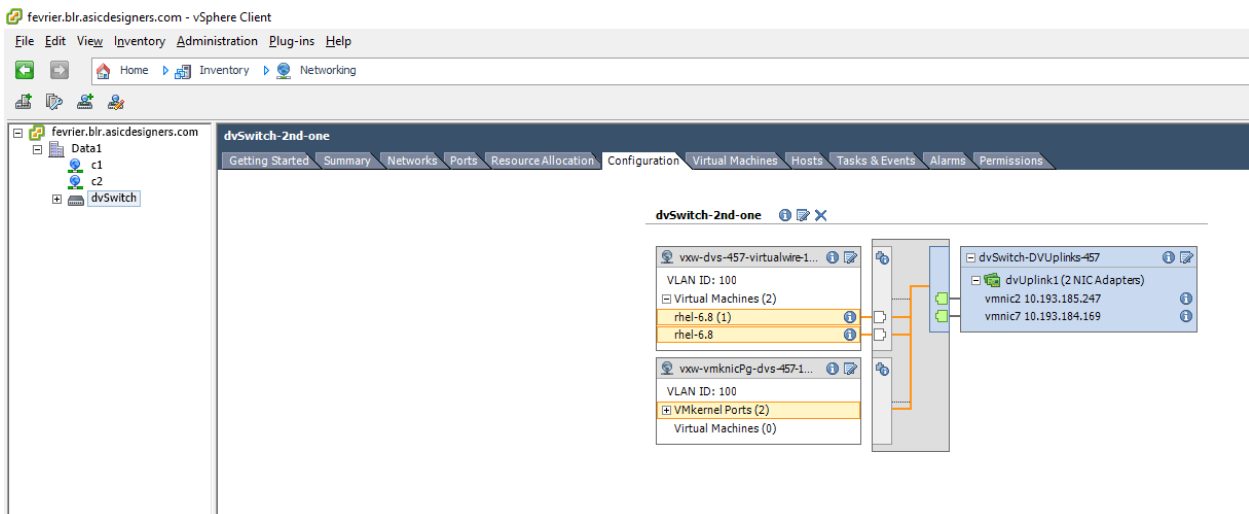
- vi. Select the hosts and VMNICs for each host, to be added to the VXLAN network. Click **Next**.



vii. Review the options selected and click **Finish**.



viii. The newly created switch will appear in the inventory.



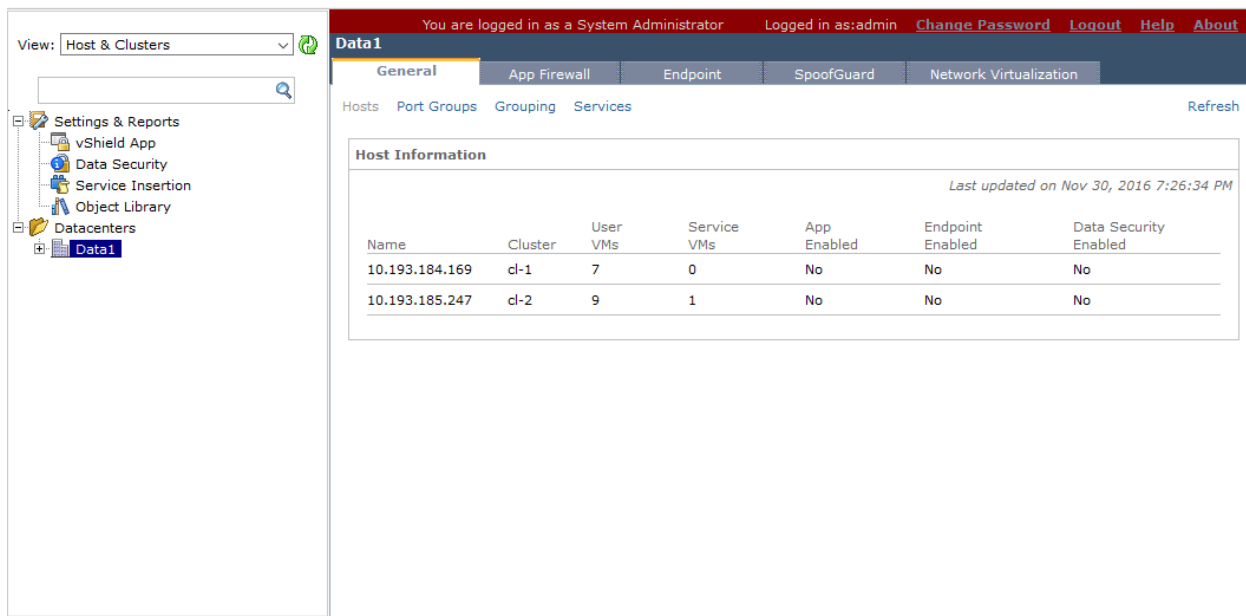


### 5.7.4. Installing vShield Manager

Before proceeding, please follow the steps mentioned in VMware's [vShield installation guide](#) to install and configure vShield Manager.

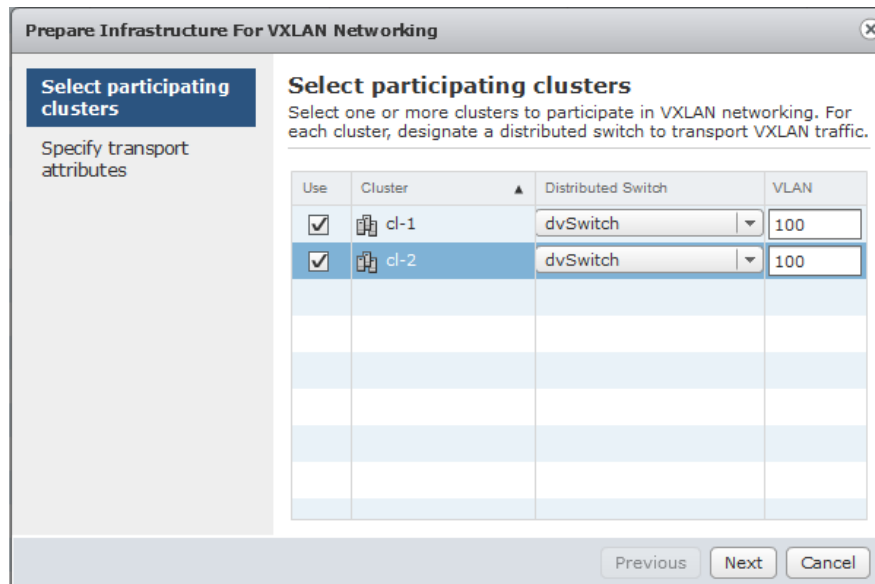
### 5.7.5. Setting up VXLAN

- i. Using a web browser, login to vShield Manager and select your datacenter in the left pane.



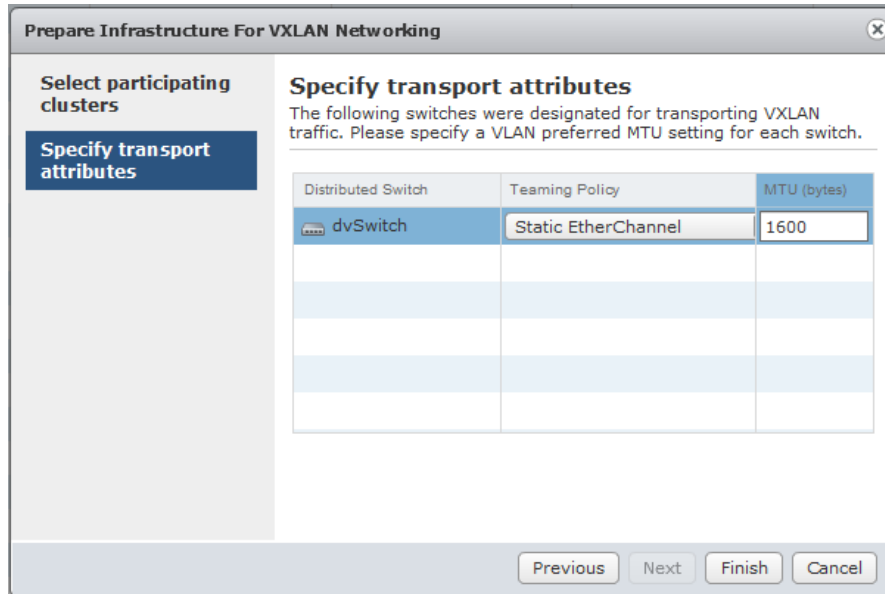
Name	Cluster	User VMs	Service VMs	App Enabled	Endpoint Enabled	Data Security Enabled
10.193.184.169	cl-1	7	0	No	No	No
10.193.185.247	cl-2	9	1	No	No	No

- ii. Select the **Network Virtualization** tab on the right pane, then click on the **Preparation** link and then **Edit**. Select the clusters you want to add to the VXLAN. For each of the cluster added, select the designated distributed switch to transport the VXLAN traffic, and specify the VLANID. Click **Next**.

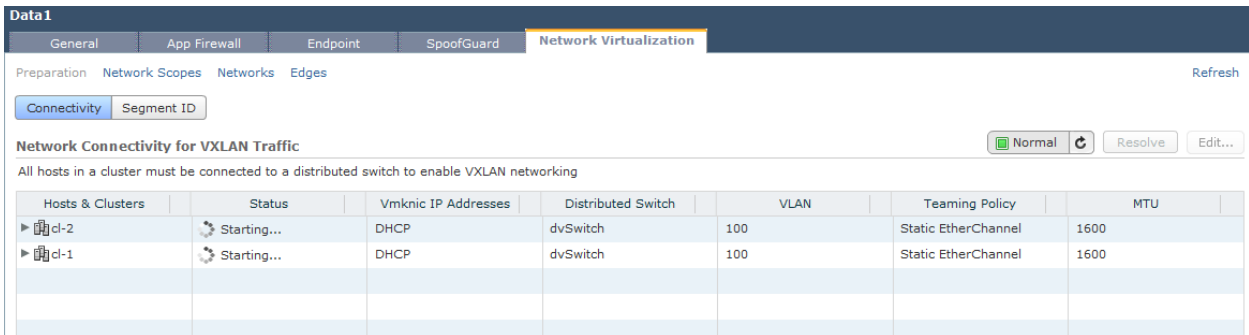


Use	Cluster	Distributed Switch	VLAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	cl-1	dvSwitch	100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	cl-2	dvSwitch	100
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			

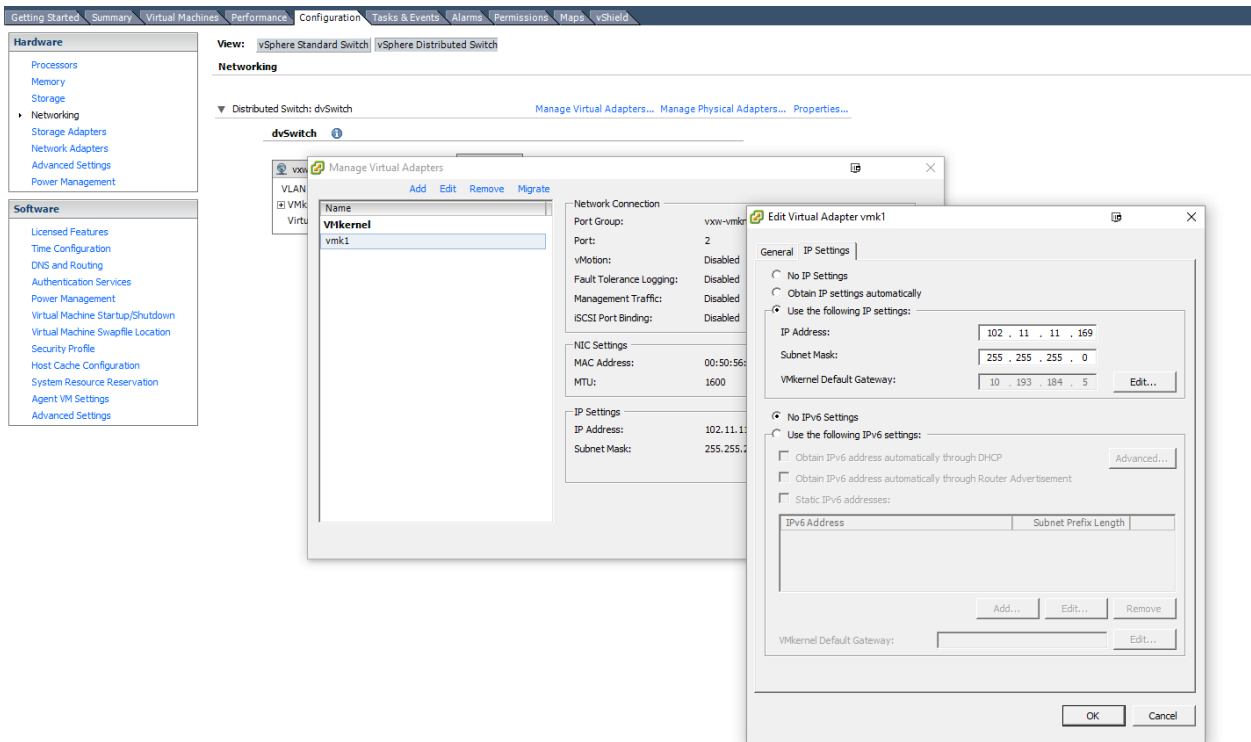
- iii. For the distributed switch, select the desired teaming policy and set the MTU to 1600 (to accommodate VXLAN header). Click **Finish**.



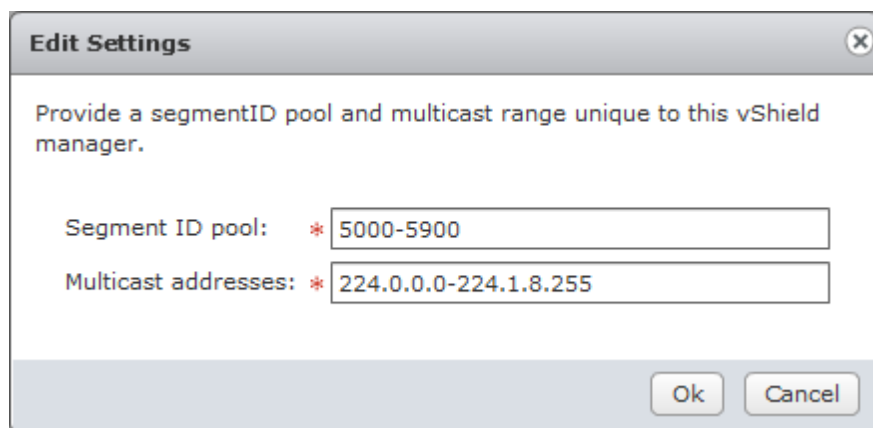
- iv. The newly added clusters will be initialized now.



- v. In case DHCP server is not available for clusters, use vSphere client to configure static IPs for the hosts.



- vi. While still in the **Preparation** section, click the **Segment ID** button and then **Edit**. Set the range for *Segment ID pool* and *Multicast addresses*. Click **OK**.



- vii. Click the **Network Scopes** link and then **+**. Provide a name and description (optional) for the new network scope. Select the clusters you want to add in this network scope. Click **Ok**.

**Add Network Scope** ✕

Name \*

Description

Select One or More Clusters to Add to this Network Scope

Clusters	Distributed Switch	Readiness
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cl-2	dvSwitch	✓ Ready
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cl-1	dvSwitch	✓ Ready

**Data1**

General
App Firewall
Endpoint
SpoofGuard
Network Virtualization

Preparation
Network Scopes
Networks
Edges

+ ✕

Name	Description
vxlan-scope	

- viii. Click the **Networks** link and press the **+**. Provide a name and description (optional) for the new VXLAN. Click on *Network Scope* and select the network scope created in the previous step from the drop-down. Click **Ok**.

**Create VXLAN Network** ✕

Name \*

Description

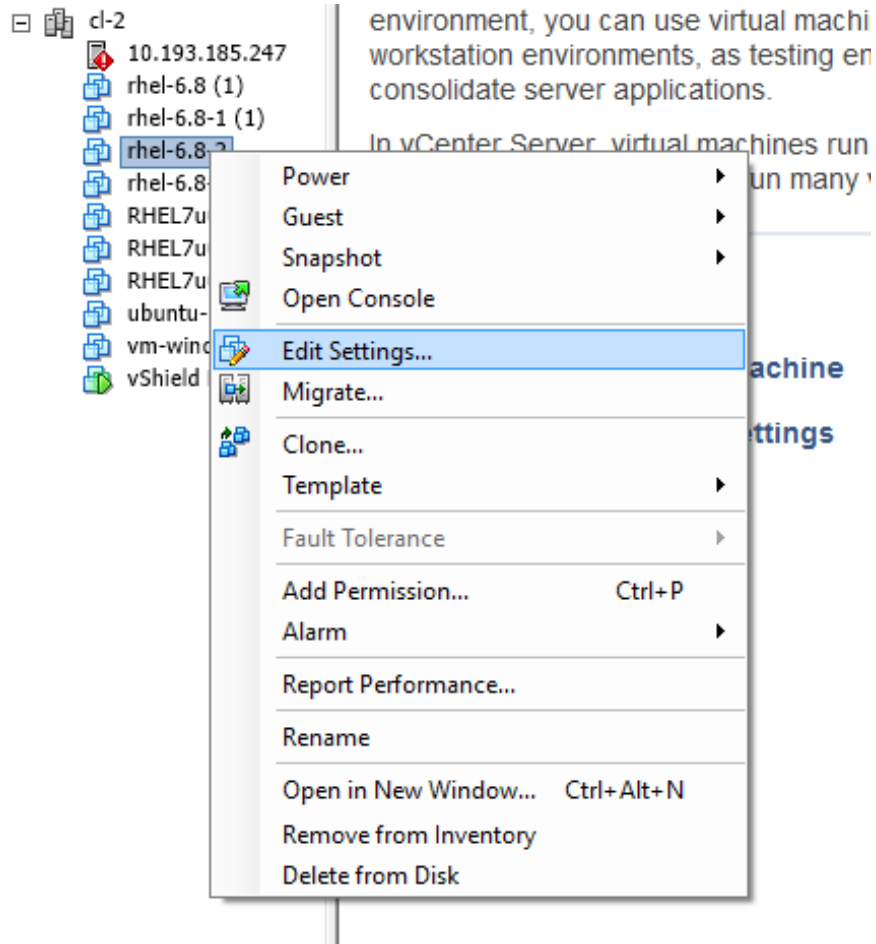
Network Scope  ▾

**Scope Details**

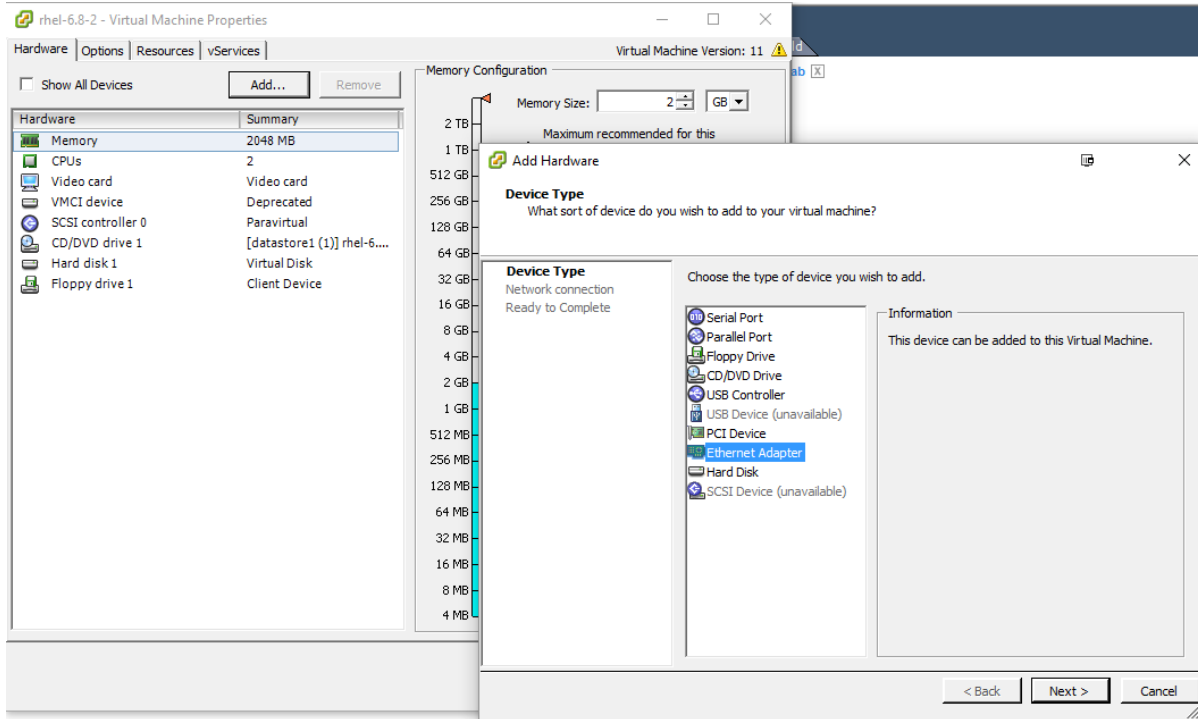
Name	vxlan-scope
Description	
▶ Clusters	
▶ Available Services	

Data 1					
General		App Firewall	Endpoint	SpoofGuard	Network Virtualization
Preparation					
Network Scopes				Networks	Edges
Refresh					
Name	Status	Segment ID	Multicast IP Address	Edge	
vxlan-virtual-wire	OK	5000	224.0.0.0		

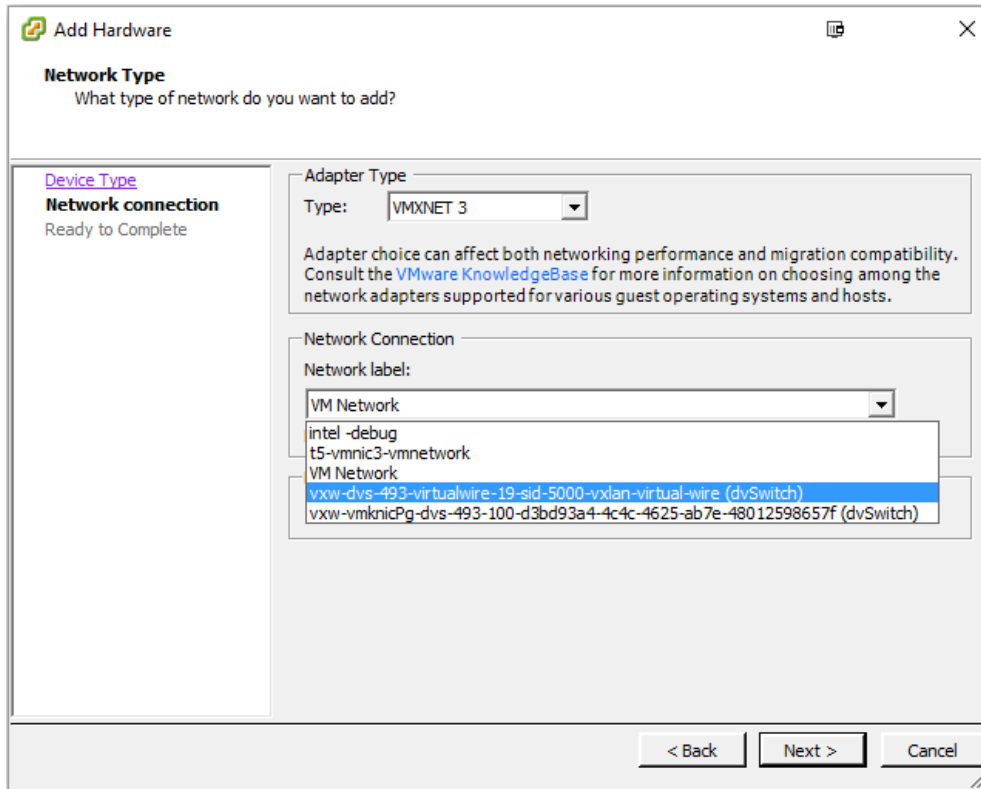
- ix. In vSphere client, right-click on the VM you want to add to the VXLAN and select *Edit Settings*.



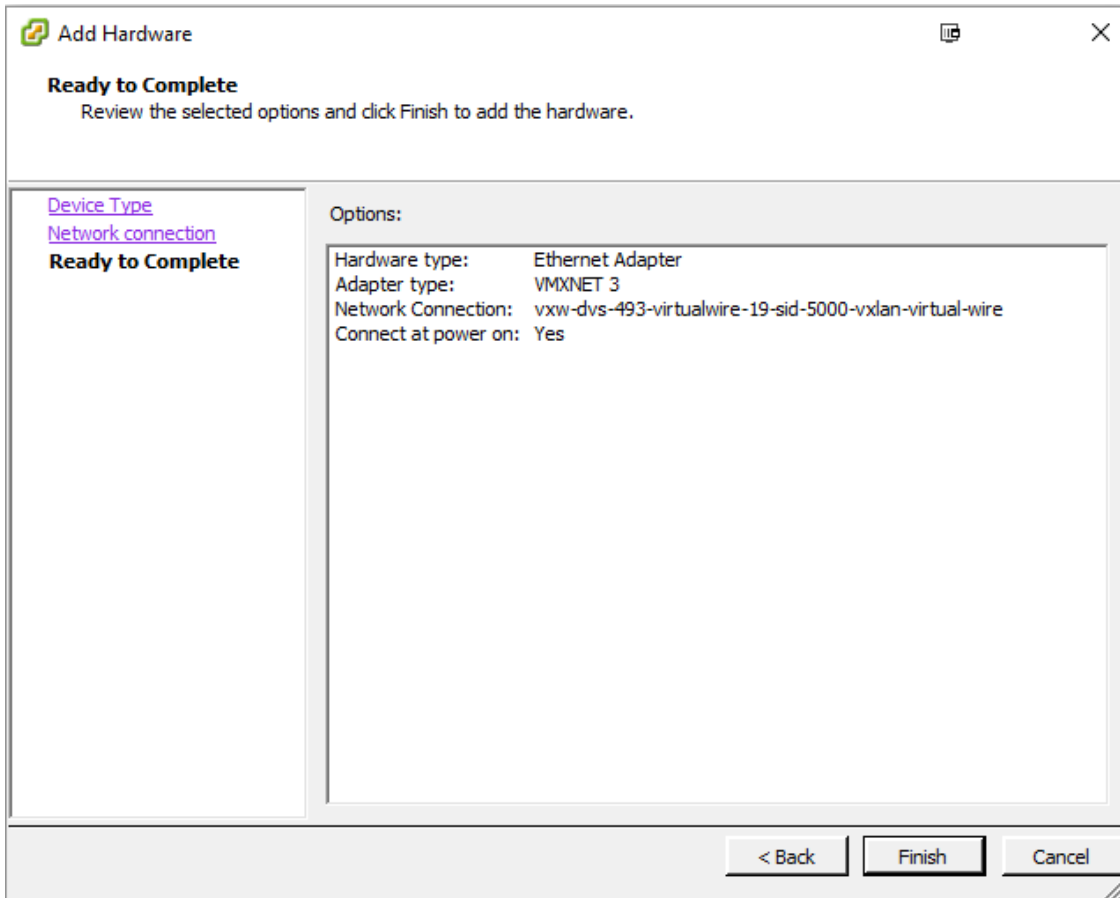
- x. Click **Add**, select *Ethernet Adapter* and then click **Next**.



- xi. Select the VXLAN created previously from the *Network label* drop-down. Click **Next**.



- xii. Review the options selected and click **Finish**.



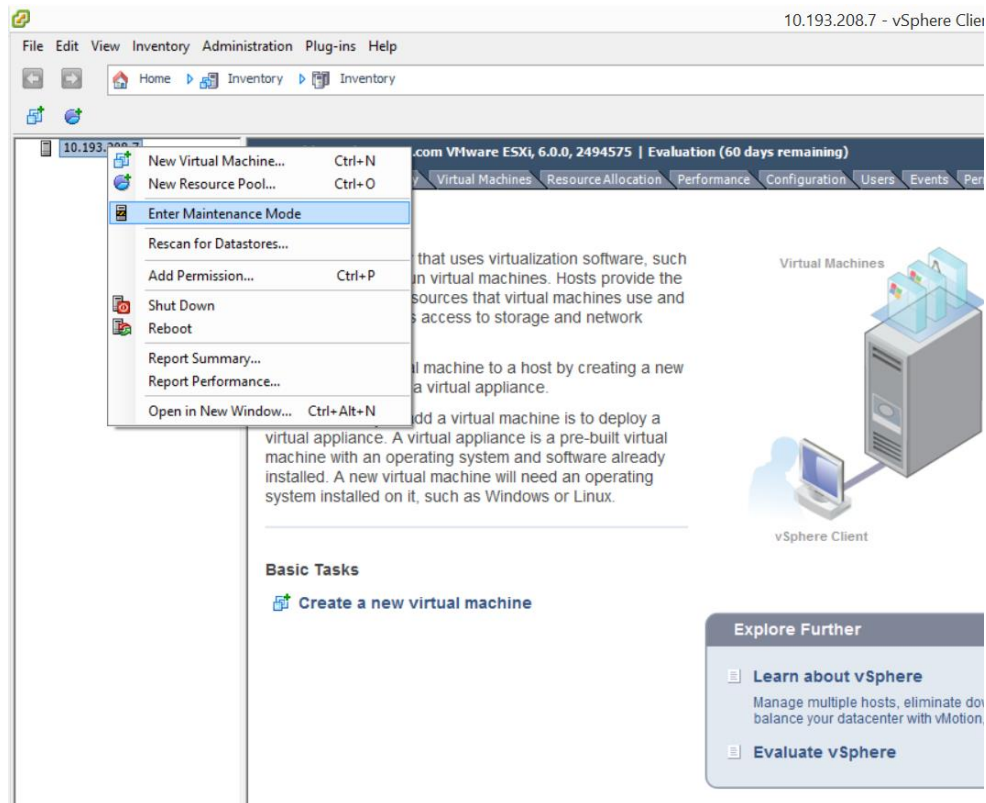
- xiii. All the VMs added to the VXLAN will now be able to communicate successfully.



## 6. Software/Driver Uninstallation

Follow the steps mentioned below to uninstall the driver:

- i. Put the host in maintenance mode using the vSphere Client:



- ii. Uninstall the driver:

```
[root@host:~] esxcli software vib remove -n cxl
```

- iii. Reboot the host:

```
[root@host:~] reboot
```

## 7. Software/Driver Update

For any distribution specific problems, please check README and Release Notes included in the release for possible workaround.

Please visit Chelsio support web site <http://service.chelsio.com/> for regular updates on various software/drivers. You can also subscribe to our newsletter for the latest software updates.

## 8. Appendix

### 8.1. Chelsio End-User License Agreement (EULA)

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209 North Fair Oaks Avenue,  
Sunnyvale, CA 94085  
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