

# VMware vSphere Update Manager

## Using Update Manager on Cluster Level with DRS

driftar's Blog

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## Introduction

In today's world of IT, datacenter and cloud automation, maintenance windows and downtime are a special topic. A few years ago the IT department did updates mostly on weekends because nobody was working then. On Monday everyone came back to the office, the mail server was patched and driver updates were installed. Anybody uses IT like running water. And nobody except the IT knows what effort it is to keep the IT thus the business running.

Today at least maintenance windows with service interruption are somewhat of the past, but not to be forgotten, because everyone wants access to their data whenever it's needed, wherever it's located. You can't shut down a mail server to install updates, you can't restart virtualization hosts just to install a driver or a patch. IT has to continue to run like water from the tap.

At least the latter, updating virtualization hosts, I'll cover with this white paper.

## Background

I'm working as a system engineer for an IT company in Switzerland. We provide different services to our customers, ranging from small to medium sized businesses. I saw so many transformations in business needs, but most of the customers had the same wish. The employees of the customers should have access to their emails, wanted to work from home or when they are on the go. So the IT systems had to run twenty four hours and seven days a week.

The topic in this white paper is how to use VMware vSphere Update Manager on a DRS enabled Cluster. The steps are explained in the following guide.

VMware vSphere Update Manager is a powerful tool to update your ESXi hosts. You can automatically set your hosts into maintenance mode, and if DRS is enabled, your virtual machines are moved to other hosts automatically. At least from infrastructure perspective you can avoid any maintenance window or even downtime. Because the DRS cluster manages the VMs and you can patch your ESXi hosts in the middle of the day.

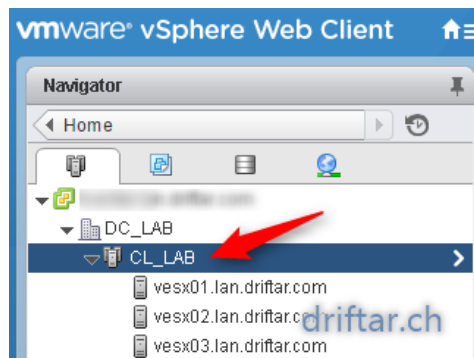
## Solution

The following steps will guide you through the necessary steps. This guide does not cover each and every detail. To learn more how to use the vSphere Update Manager please visit the official VMware website:

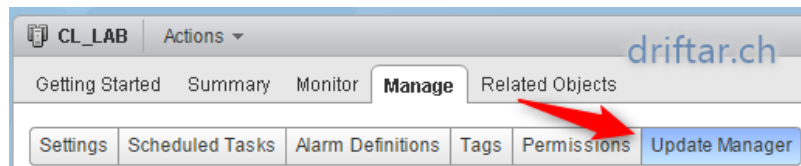
vSphere Update Manager Documentation  
[https://www.vmware.com/support/pubs/vum\\_pubs.html](https://www.vmware.com/support/pubs/vum_pubs.html)

### Login to vCenter and scan for updates

- 1) Login to your vCenter with vSphere Web Client
- 2) Click on «Hosts and Clusters» and navigate to your cluster



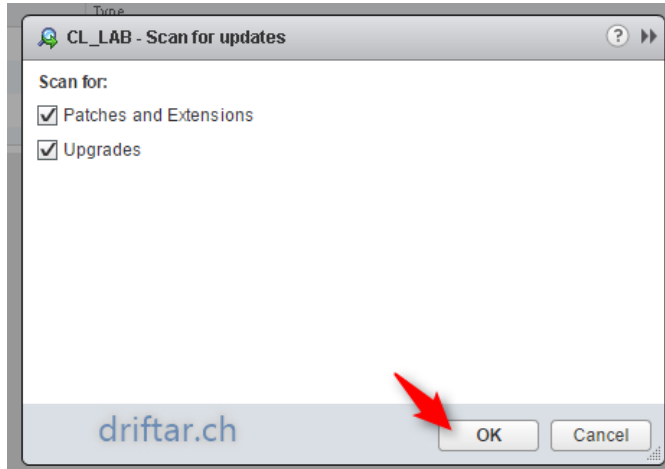
- 3) Click on «Update Manager»



- 4) Click on «Scan for Updates...» to initiate a scan / check for updates on Cluster level



- 5) Select the things you wish to scan for (patches and extensions and / or upgrades) and click OK



Now your vCenter knows which updates are missing. Let's move on to the staging process, which downloads the updates onto your ESXi hosts.

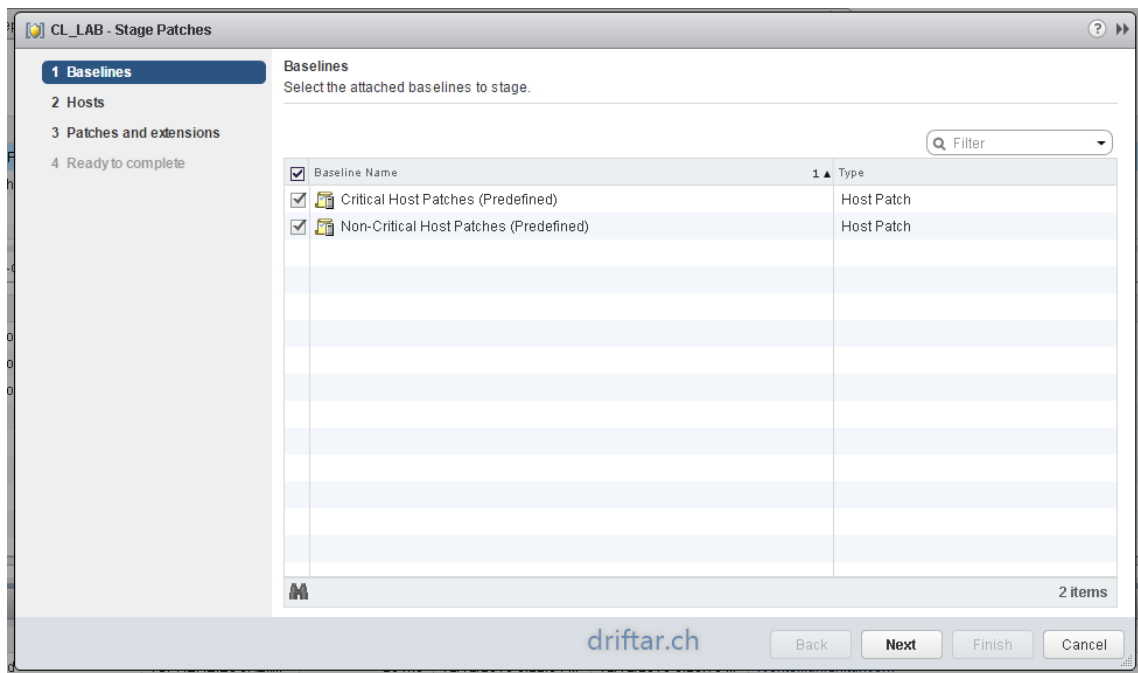
## Stage Patches

Staging allows you to download the patches and extensions from the Update Manager server to the ESX / ESXi hosts, without applying the patches and extensions immediately. Staging patches and extensions speeds up the remediation process because the patches and extensions are already available locally on the hosts.

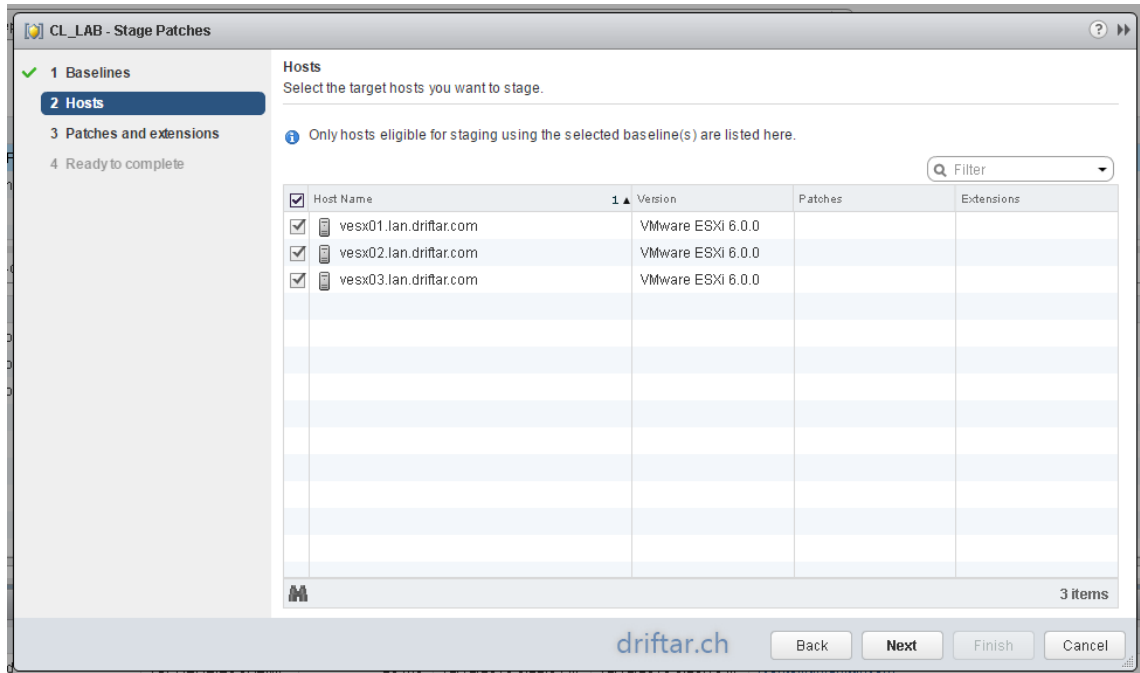
- 1) After scanning is completed, click on «Stage Patches...» to stage the patches you scanned for to your ESXi hosts.



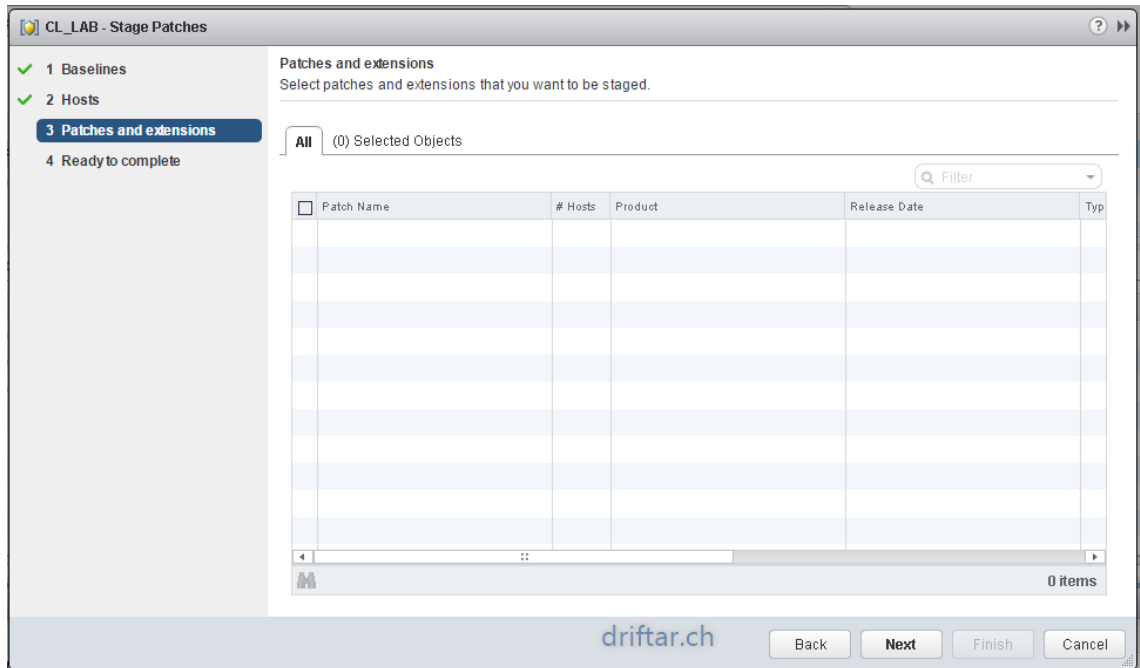
- 2) Follow through the staging assistant
- 3) Select the attached baselines you wish to stage



4) Select the target hosts you want to stage



5) Check the lists of available updates. You can include or exclude updates if necessary.



## Remediation of patches

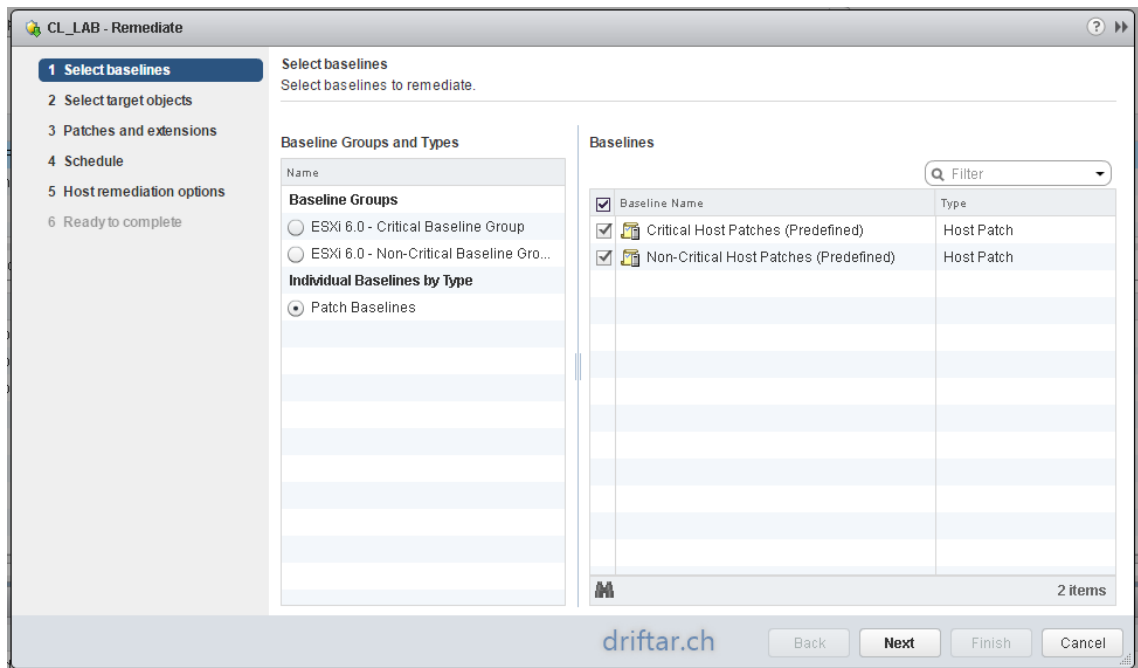
Now after staging we can start the remediation process. Remediation means to install the updates and extensions onto your hosts. As mentioned at the beginning, if you're using a DRS enabled vSphere cluster, your VMs will be automatically moved to other hosts in this cluster.

Please make sure that there are enough resources available if one host is going into maintenance mode. Otherwise entering maintenance mode may fail and you have to troubleshoot that.

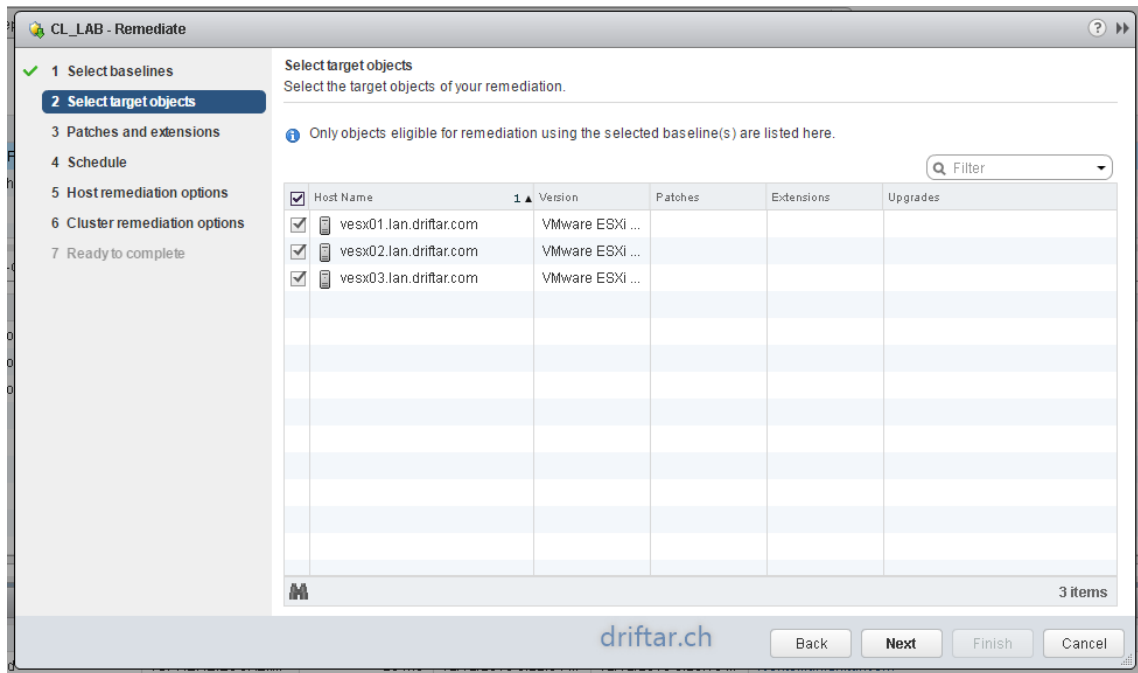
- 1) Now click on «Remediate...»



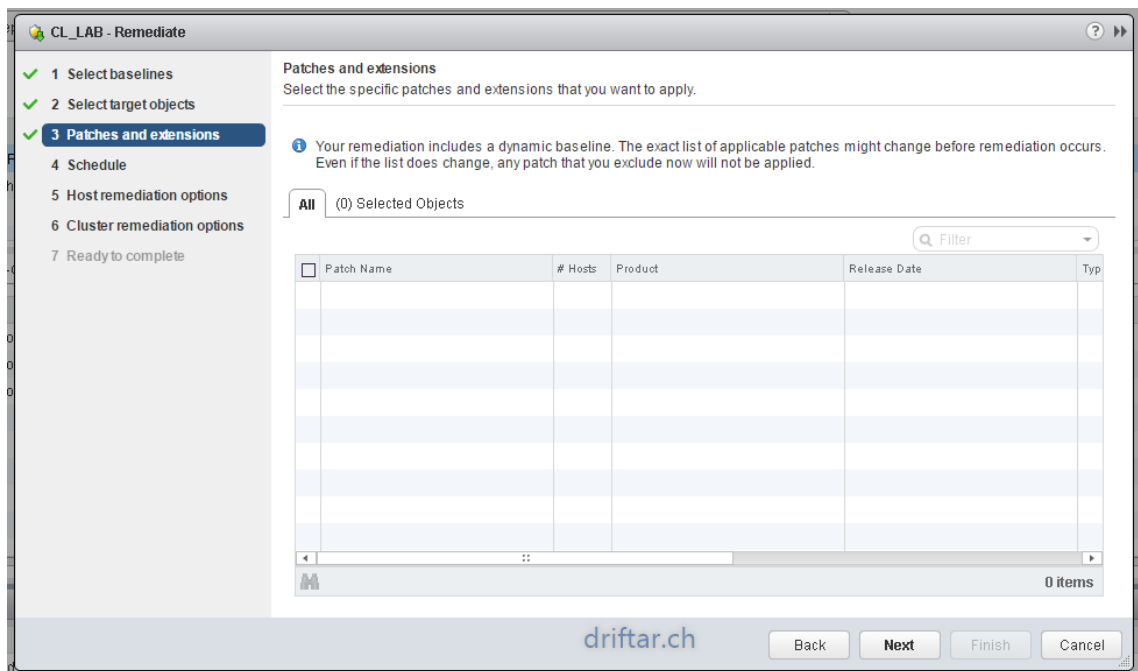
- 2) Select baselines to remediate



## 3) Select the target objects for your remediation

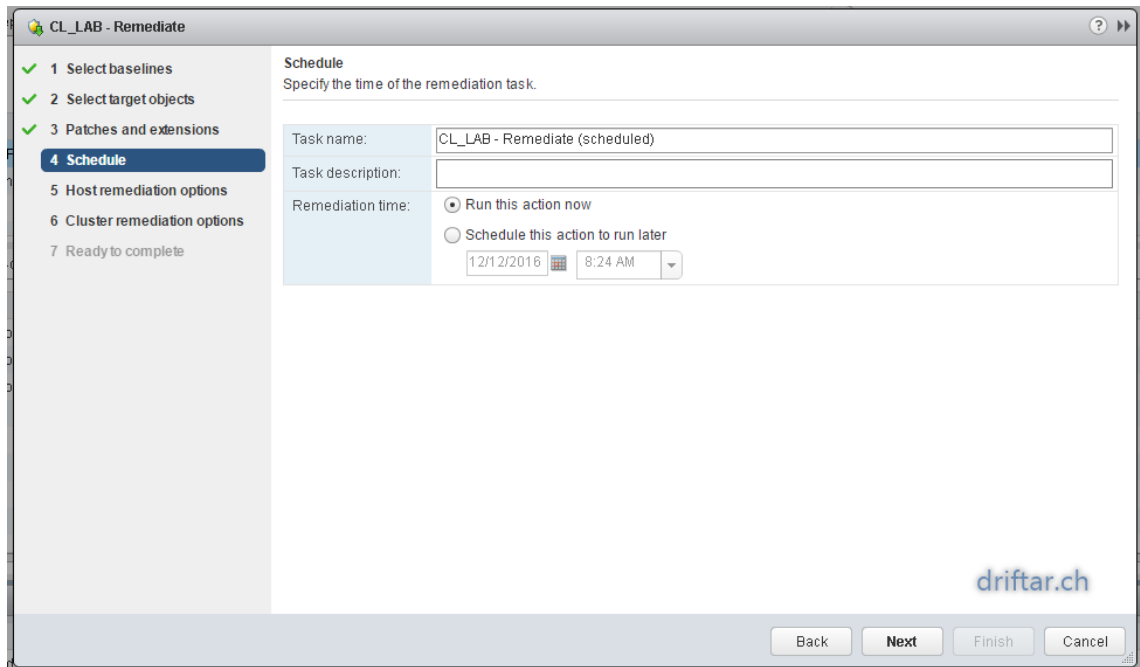


## 4) Select specific patches and extensions

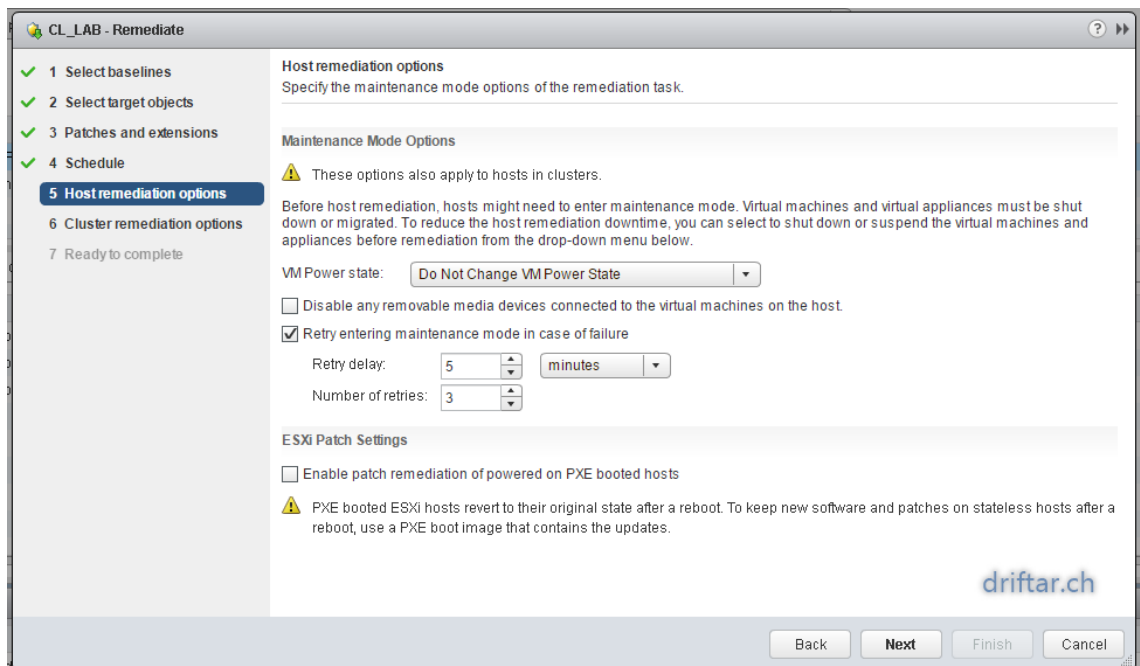




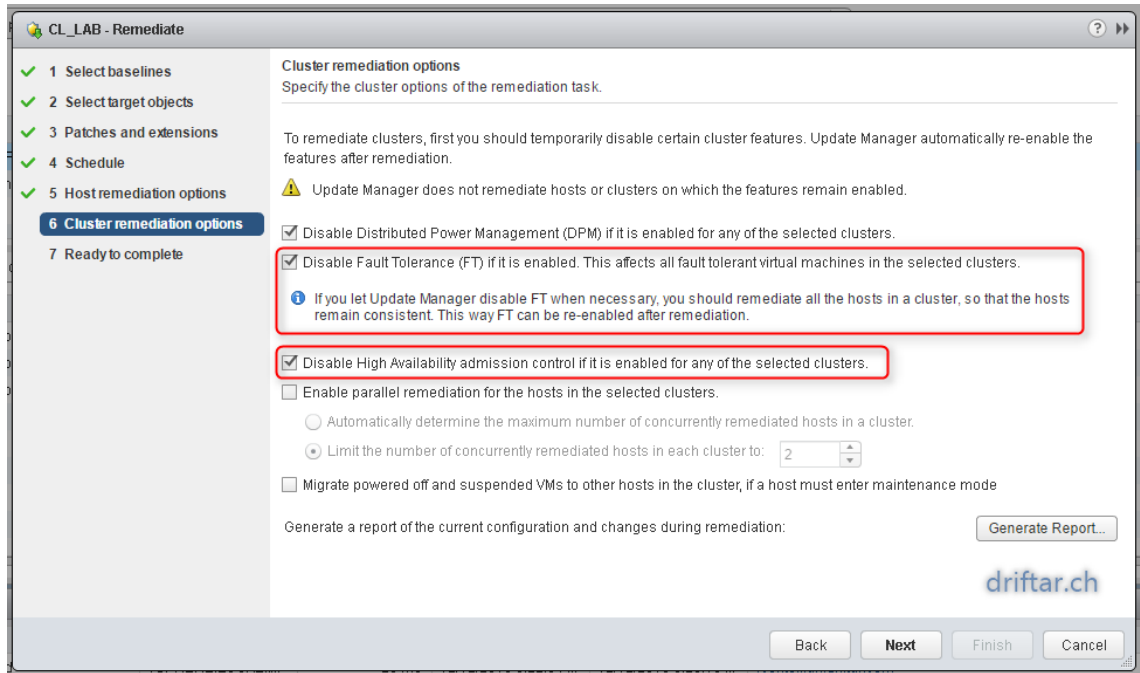
5) Schedule the remediation (or select «Run this action now»)



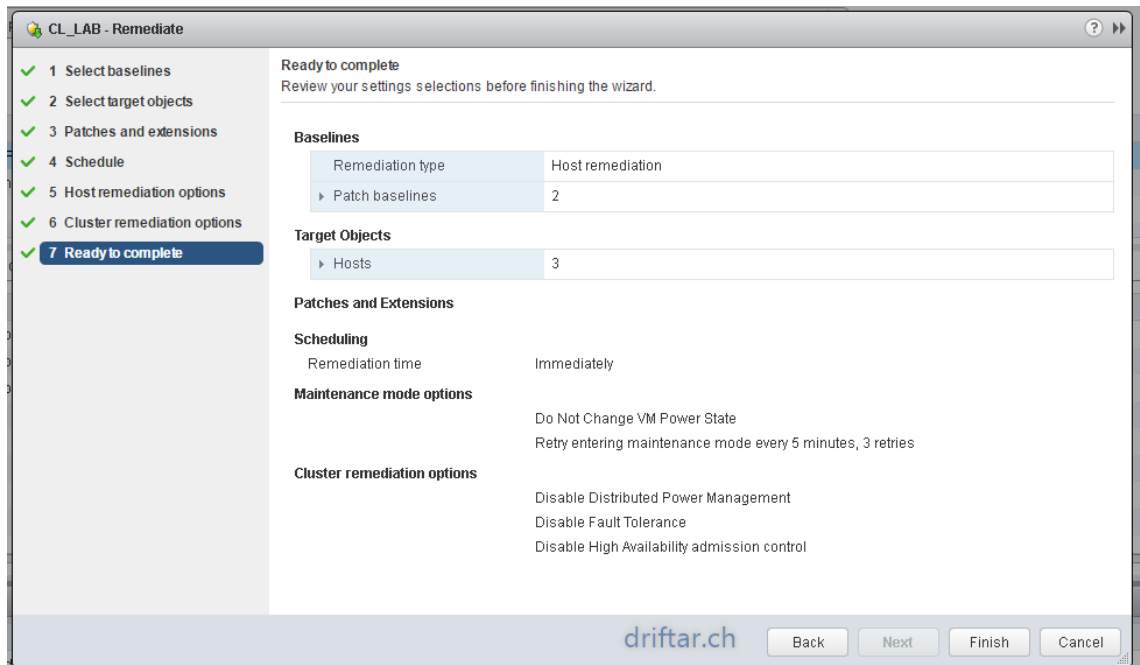
6) Specify maintenance mode options, depending on your cluster or other specific needs. The default settings should work.



- 7) Specify the cluster options
  - a. Disable Fault Tolerance
  - b. Disable High Availability admission control



- 8) Click «Finish». Depending on your schedule the update manager begins right now or at the scheduled time.



## Conclusion

I hope that this white paper will help you using the vSphere Update Manager in your environment. At least in my customer's environments I can't think about working on ESXi updates without Update Manager. It is a really helpful tool to keep your hosts patched and updated.

With some configuration you're even able to update your ESXi host to the next ESXi version. You can load the necessary installation packages into your vSphere Update Manager and then upgrade your hosts. Working in the server room is not necessary any more, at least nor for installing updates and upgrades.

Thank you for reading.