

Reference Configuration - SUSE Rancher



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Draft

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Preface

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview and procedure of implementing [SUSE \(https://www.suse.com\)](https://www.suse.com)® and partner offerings for [SUSE Rancher \(https://rancher.com/products/rancher/\)](https://rancher.com/products/rancher/), as a multi-cluster container management platform for organizations that deploy containerized workloads, orchestrated by Kubernetes. SUSE Rancher makes it easy to deploy, manage, and use Kubernetes everywhere, meet IT requirements, and empower DevOps teams.

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1 Introduction

On the digital transformation journey to a full cloud native landscape, utilization of microservices becomes the main approach with the dominant technology for such container orchestration being Kubernetes ¹ With its large community of developers and abundant features and capabilities, Kubernetes has become the defacto standard and is included across most container-as-a-service platforms. With all of these technologies in place, both developer and operation teams can effectively deploy, manage and deliver functionality to their end users in a resilient and agile manner.

1.1 Motivation

While any developer or organization may simply start with a single, Kubernetes-based deployment, it is very common for that number of cluster instances to rapidly grow. While each of these may have specific focus areas, it becomes imperative to figure out how to use, manage, maintain and replicate all of these instances over time.

This is where SUSE Rancher leads the industry, being able to manage access, usage, infrastructure and applications across clusters, that are Cloud Native Computing Foundation (CNCF ²) conformant ³, anywhere across edge, on-premise data centers, or cloud service providers. SUSE Rancher optimizes creating and managing Kubernetes clusters like:

- Lightweight edge-centric K3s (<https://rancher.com/products/k3s/>) 
- Rancher Kubernetes Engine (RKE (<https://rancher.com/products/rke/>) )
- and other Kubernetes clusters that are based upon CNCF certified ⁴ Kubernetes distributions or installers

and deployed across various [supported](https://rancher.com/support-maintenance-terms)  infrastructure elements.

Once on such a digital transformation journey, some of the next focus areas are:

- Compute Platform

¹ <https://kubernetes.io/> 

² <https://www.cncf.io/> 

³ <https://www.cncf.io/certification/software-conformance> 

⁴ <https://www.cncf.io/certification/cka/> 

- To optimize availability, performance, scalability and integrity, assess current system platforms or acquire and utilize new variations from:
 - Independent Hardware Vendors (IHV), like Hewlett Packard Enterprise (<https://www.hpe.com/us/en/home.html>)  ® , as the platform for physical, baremetal, hypervisors and virtual machines

1.2 Scope

The scope of this document is to provide a layered *reference configuration* for SUSE Rancher. This can be done in a variety of solution layered stacks, to become a fundamental component of a managing multiple Kubernetes ecosystems.

1.3 Audience

This document is intended for IT decision makers, architects, system administrators and technicians who are implementing a flexible, software-defined Kubernetes management platform. One should still be familiar with the traditional IT infrastructure pillars — networking, computing and storage — along with the local use cases for sizing, scaling and limitations within each pillars' environments.

2 Business aspect

Agility is the name of the game in modern application development. This is driving developers toward more cloud native methodologies that focus on microservices architectures and streamlined workflows. Container technologies, like Kubernetes, embody this agile approach and help enable cloud native transformation.

By unifying IT operations with Kubernetes, organizations realize key benefits like increased reliability, improved security and greater efficiencies with standardized automation. Therefore, Kubernetes infrastructure platforms are adopted by enterprises to deliver:

Cluster Operations

Improved Production and DevOps efficiencies with simplified cluster usage and robust operations

Security Policy & User Management

Consistent security policy enforcement plus advanced user management on any Kubernetes infrastructure

Access to Shared Tools & Services

A high level of reliability with easy, consistent access to a broad set of tools and services

2.1 Business problem

Many organizations are deploying Kubernetes clusters everywhere – in the cloud, on-premises, and at the edge - to unify IT operations. Such organizations can realize dramatic benefits, including:

- Consistently deliver a high level of reliability on any infrastructure
- Improve DevOps efficiency with standardized automation
- Ensure enforcement of security policies on any infrastructure

However, simply relying on upstream Kubernetes alone can introduce overhead and risk because Kubernetes clusters are typically deployed:

- Without central visibility
- Without consistent security policies
- And must be managed independently

Deploying a scalable kubernetes requires consideration of a large ecosystem, encompassing many software and infrastructure components and providers. Further, the ability to continually address the needs and concerns of:

Developers

For those who just focus on writing code to build their apps securely using a preferred workflow, providing a simple, push-button deployment mechanism of their containerized workloads where needed.

IT Operators

General infrastructure requirements still rely upon traditional IT pillars are for the stacked, underlying infrastructure. Ease of deployment, availability, scalability, resiliency, performance, security and integrity are still core concerns to be addressed for administrative control and observability.

Beyond just the core infrastructure software layers of managed Kubernetes clusters, organizations may be also be impacted by:

Compute Platform

Potential inconsistencies and impacts of multiple target system platforms for the distributed deployments of the cluster elements, across:

- physical, baremetal, hypervisors and virtual machines

2.2 Business value

By allowing operation teams to focus on infrastructure and developers to deploy code the way they want too, SUSE and the Rancher offerings helps bring products to market faster and accelerate an organization's digital transformation.

SUSE Rancher is a fundamental part of the complete software stack for teams adopting containers. It provides DevOps teams with integrated tools for running containerized workloads while also addressing the operational and security challenges of managing multiple Kubernetes clusters across any targeted infrastructure.

Developers

SUSE Rancher makes it easy to securely deploy containerized applications no matter where the Kubernetes infrastructure runs — in the cloud, on-premises, or at the edge. Using Helm or the App Catalog to deploy and manage applications across any or all these environments, ensuring multi-cluster consistency with a single deployment process.

IT Operators

SUSE Rancher not only deploys and manages production-grade Kubernetes clusters from datacenter to cloud to the edge, it also unites them with centralized authentication, access control and observability. Further, it streamlines cluster deployment on bare metal or virtual machines and maintains them using defined security policies.

With this increased consistency of the managed Kubernetes infrastructure clusters, organizations benefit from an even higher level of the Cloud Native Computing model where each layer only relies upon the API and version of the adjacent layer. For example:

Compute Platform

Utilizing the above software application and technology solutions with the server platforms offered by Hewlett Packard Enterprise ([HPE \(https://www.hpe.com/us/en/home.html\)](https://www.hpe.com/us/en/home.html)) provides many alternative for scale, cost-effectiveness and performance options that could align with local IT staff platform preferences:

- density-optimized - high performance and efficiency for big data and the most demanding workloads
- mission-critical - systems of intelligence to fuel your digital transformation in a world where time and data are the new currency and business continuity is expected
- composable - fully adaptable and ready for Hybrid-IT to future-proof your data center for today's workloads and tomorrow's disruptors
- IoT - realize the potential of the Internet of Things to provide compute at the network edge
- cloud - high-capacity, mass-compute open infrastructure with security and software to match
- and virtualized use cases.

3 Architectural overview

This section outlines the core elements of the SUSE Rancher solution, along with the suggested target platforms and components.

3.1 Solution architecture

The figure below illustrates the high-level architecture of the SUSE Rancher installation that manages multiple downstream Kubernetes clusters:



FIGURE 3.1: ARCHITECTURE OVERVIEW - SUSE RANCHER

Authentication Proxy

A user is authenticated via SUSE Rancher and then, if authorized, can access both the SUSE Rancher environment and the downstream clusters and workloads.

API Server

This provides the programmatic interface backend for a user, utilizing command-line interactions with SUSE Rancher and the managed clusters.

Data Store

The purpose of this service is to capture the configuration and state of SUSE Rancher and the managed clusters to aid in backup and recovery processes.

Cluster Controller

Interacting with a cluster agent on the downstream cluster, the cluster controller allows the communication path for users and services to leverage for workloads and cluster management.

Once setup, users can potentially interact with SUSE Rancher through the web-based user interface (UI), the command-line interface (CLI), and programmatically through the application programming interface (API). Depending upon the assigned roles, group membership and privileges, a user could:

- manage all clusters, users, roles, projects
- deploy new clusters, import other clusters, or remove existing ones
- manage workloads across respective or labeled clusters
- simply view clusters or workloads, or just benefit from what is running

For the best performance and security, the recommended deployment is a dedicated Kubernetes cluster for the SUSE Rancher management server. Running user workloads on this cluster is not advised. After deploying SUSE Rancher, one can then create or import clusters for orchestrated workloads.

4 Component model

This section describes the various components being used to create a SUSE Rancher solution deployment.

4.1 Component overview

By utilizing:

- Software
 - Multi-cluster Management Server - SUSE Rancher
 - Kubernetes Platform - K3s
 - Linux Operating System - SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro
- Compute Platform

one can create the necessary infrastructure and services. Further details for these components are described in the following sections.

4.2 Software - SUSE Rancher

SUSE Rancher is a complete cluster and container management platform built to reside on Kubernetes itself. It addresses these challenges by delivering the following key functions, as shown in the following figure:



FIGURE 4.1: OVERVIEW OF SUSE RANCHER

Certified Kubernetes Distributions

SUSE Rancher supports management of any certified Kubernetes distribution. That includes:

- for development, edge, branch workloads, SUSE offerings like K3s (<https://rancher.com/products/k3s/>), a certified lightweight distribution of Kubernetes
- for on-premises workloads, a SUSE offering Rancher Kubernetes Engine (RKE (<https://rancher.com/products/rke/>)), a certified Kubernetes distribution for both bare-metal and virtualized servers
- for the public cloud, hosted Kubernetes services like
 - Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service (EKS ¹),
 - Azure Kubernetes Service (AKS ²) and
 - Google Kubernetes Engine (GKE ³).

¹ <https://aws.amazon.com/eks>

Simplified Cluster Operations and Infrastructure Management

SUSE Rancher provides simple, consistent cluster operations including provisioning and templates, configuration and lifecycle version management, along with visibility and diagnostics.

Security and Authentication

SUSE Rancher incorporates and leverages various single-signon services, to automate processes and apply a consistent set of user access and security policies for all the managed clusters, no matter where they're running.

Policy Enforcement and Governance

SUSE Rancher includes audit and security guideline enforcement, monitoring and logging functions, along with user, network and workload policies distributed across all managed clusters.

Platform Services

SUSE Rancher also provides a rich catalog of services for building, deploying and scaling containerized applications, including app packaging, CI/CD, logging, monitoring and service mesh.

Given SUSE Rancher relies upon being deployed on a Kubernetes platform, the next sections describe the suggested component layering approach.

4.3 Software - K3s

K3s is packaged as a single binary, which is about 50 megabytes in size. Bundled in that single binary is everything needed to run Kubernetes anywhere, including low-powered IoT and Edge-based devices. The binary includes:

- the container runtime
- any important host utilities like

² <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/overview/kubernetes-on-azure/> 

³ <https://cloud.google.com/kubernetes-engine> 

- iptables, socat and du.

The only OS dependencies are the Linux kernel itself and a proper dev, proc and sysfs mounts (this is done automatically on all modern Linux distributions). K3s bundles the Kubernetes components:

- kube-apiserver,
- kube-controller-manager,
- kube-scheduler,
- kubelet and
- kube-proxy

into combined processes that are presented as a simple server and agent model, as represented in the following figure:



FIGURE 4.2: OVERVIEW OF K3S

K3s can run as a complete cluster on a single node or can be expanded into a multi-node cluster. Besides the core Kubernetes components, these are also included:

- containerd,
- Flannel,
- CoreDNS,
- ingress controller and
- a simple host port-based service load balancer.

All of these components are optional and can be swapped out for your implementation of choice. With these included components, you get a fully functional and CNCF-conformant cluster so you can start running apps right away. K3s is now a CNCF Sandbox project, being the first Kubernetes distribution ever to be adopted into sandbox.

Learn more information about K3s at <https://k3s.io> 

4.4 Software - SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro

SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro combines the assurance of enterprise-grade security and compliance with the immutability and portability of a modern, lightweight operating system. The top 4 features are:

Immutable OS

Immutable design ensures the OS is not altered during runtime and runs reliably every single time. Security signed and verified transactional updates are easy to rollback if things go wrong.

Security and Compliance

Fully open source and built using open standards, SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro leverages SUSE Linux Enterprise common code base, to provide FIPS 140-2, DISA SRG/STIG, integration with CIS and Common Criteria certified configurations. Includes fully supported security framework (SELinux) with policies.

Architectural Flexibility

Both Arm and x86-64 architectures are supported so you can deploy edge applications with confidence across multiple architectures.

Kubernetes-Ready

You can easily combine SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro with the latest cloud-native technologies including SUSE Rancher, Rancher Kubernetes Engine, Longhorn persistent block storage, and K3s, the world's most popular Kubernetes distribution for use in low resource, distributed edge locations.

As a result, you get an ultra-reliable infrastructure platform that is also simple to use and comes out-of-the-box with best-in-class compliance. Furthermore, SUSE's flexible subscription model ensures enterprise assurance for any edge, embedded or IoT deployment without vendor lock-

in. A free, evaluation copy can be [downloaded \(https://www.suse.com/download/sle-micro/\)](https://www.suse.com/download/sle-micro/) or if the organization already has subscriptions, both install media and updates can be obtained from [SUSE Customer Center \(https://scc.suse.com/login\)](https://scc.suse.com/login).

4.5 Compute Platform

Leveraging the enterprise grade functionality of the operating system mentioned in the previous section, many compute platforms can be the foundation of the deployment:



Note

HPE Servers Support & OS Certification Matrices (https://techlibrary.hpe.com/us/en/enterprise/servers/supportmatrix/suse_linux.aspx) outlines the minimum version of SLE required for installation, yet later service pack releases may also be used.



Tip

Any SUSE YES (<https://www.suse.com/yessearch/>) certified platform can be used for the nodes of this deployment, as long as the certification refers to the major version of the underlying SUSE operating system required by its release.

Server product-line and model options abound in the [HPE portfolio \(https://www.hpe.com/uk/en/servers.html\)](https://www.hpe.com/uk/en/servers.html), including:

HPE Synergy Servers

HPE Synergy, the first Composable Infrastructure, empowers IT to create and deliver new value easily and continuously. This single infrastructure reduces operational complexity for traditional workloads and increases operational velocity for the new breed of applications and services. Through a single interface, HPE Synergy composes compute, storage and fabric pools into any configuration for any application. It also enables a broad range of workloads — from bare metal, to virtual machines, to containers, to operational models like hybrid cloud and DevOps. HPE Synergy enables IT to rapidly react to new business demands with the following components:

Even with the broad certification and support model across the range of available HPE platform models, the following table summarizes which might be a best-practice selection for the various deployment types and sizes (**Small**, **Medium**, **Large**, **XLarge**).



Note

HPE Servers Support & OS Certification Matrices (https://techlibrary.hpe.com/us/en/enterprise/servers/supportmatrix/suse_linux.aspx)  outlines the minimum version of SLE required for installation, yet later service pack releases may also be used.



Tip

Any SUSE YES (<https://www.suse.com/yessearch/>)  certified platform can be used for the nodes of this deployment, as long as the certification refers to the major version of the underlying SUSE operating system required by its release.

TABLE 4.1: HEWLETT PACKARD ENTERPRISE PLATFORM MATRIX FOR DEPLOYMENT TYPES

System Platform	Baremetal	Hypervisor	Virtual Machine
Synergy	SY480, SY660	SY480, SY660	



Note

A sample bill of materials, in the *Appendix A, Appendix*, cites the necessary quantities of all components, along with a reference to the minimum resource requirements needed by the software components.

5 Deployment

This section describes the process steps for the deployment of the SUSE Rancher solution. It describes the process steps to deploy each of the component layers starting as a base functional *proof-of-concept*, having considerations on migration towards *production*, providing *scaling* guidance that is needed to create the solution.

5.1 Deployment overview

The deployment stack is represented in the following figure:

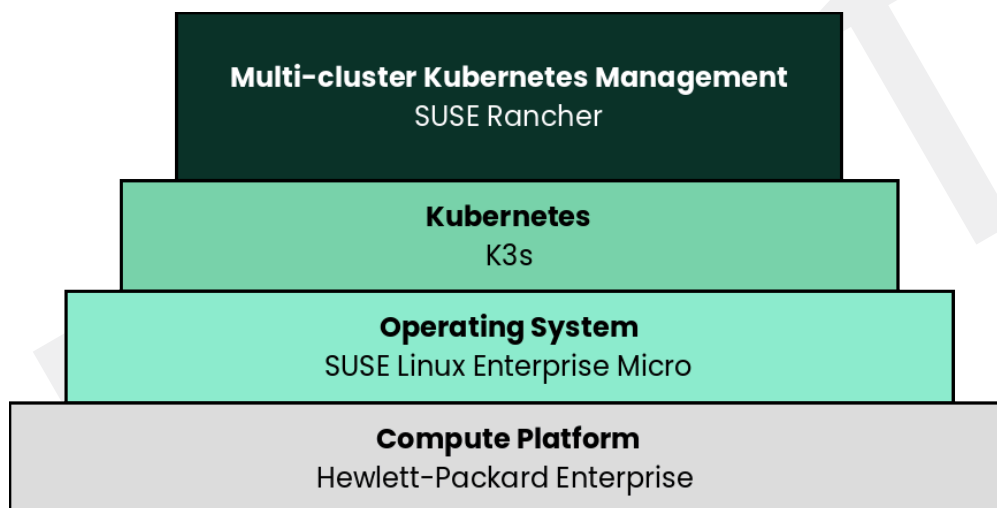


FIGURE 5.1: SUSE RANCHER DEPLOYMENT STACK

and details are covered for each layer in the following sections.




Note

The following section's content is ordered and described from the bottom layer up to the top.

5.2 Compute Platform

The base, starting configuration can reside all within a single Hewlett Packard Enterprise Synergy Frame. Based upon the relatively small resource requirements for a SUSE Rancher deployment, a viable approach is to deploy as a virtual machine (VM) on the target nodes, on top of an existing hypervisor, like KVM.

Preparation(s)

For a physical host, like SY480 (<https://buy.hpe.com/us/en/synergy/synergy-compute/synergy-compute-modules/synergy-compute-modules/hpe-synergy-480-gen10-compute-module/p/1010025863>)  used in the deployment:

1. Setup the necessary items in the Hewlett Packard Enterprise OneView interface, including:
 - Settings → Addresses and Identifiers (Subnets and Address Ranges)
 - Networks → Create (associate subnets and designate bandwidths)
 - Network Sets → Create (aggregate all the necessary Networks)
 - Logical Interconnects → Edit (include the respective Network Sets)
 - Logical Interconnect Groups → Edit (include the respective Network Sets)
 - Server Profile Templates → Create (or utilize existing hypervisor templates)
 - OS Deployment mode → could be configured to boot from PXE, local storage, shared storage
 - Firmware (upgrade to the latest and strive for consistency across node types)
 - Manage Connections (assign the Network Set to be bonded across NICs)
 - Local Storage (create the internal RAID1 set and request additional drives for the respective roles)
 - Manage Boot/BIOS/iLO Settings
 - Server Profile → Create (assign the role template to the target model)
2. Add Servers and Assign Server Roles

- Utilize the Discover function to link SUSE Rancher and Hewlett Packard Enterprise OneView to see all of the available nodes that can be assigned to their respective roles:
- Then drag and drop the nodes into the roles and ensure there is no missing configuration information, by reviewing and editing each node's server details
- Manage Settings - setup DNS/NTP, designate Disk Models/NIC Mappings/Interface Model/Networks
- Manage Subnet and Netmask - edit Management Network information, ensuring a match exists to those setup in Hewlett Packard Enterprise OneView

Deployment Process

On the respective compute module node, determine if a hypervisor is already available for the solution's virtual machines.

1. If this will be the first use of this node, an option is to deploy a KVM hypervisor, based upon SUSE Linux Enterprise Server by following the [Virtualization Guide \(https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-virtualization/#book-virt\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-virtualization/#book-virt).
- Given the simplicity of the deployment, the operating system and hypervisor can be installed with the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server ISO media and the Hewlett Packard Enterprise iLO virtual media and virtual console methodology.
2. Then for the solution VM, utilize the hypervisor user interface to allocate the necessary CPU, memory, disk and networking as noted in the SUSE Rancher [hardware requirements \(https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/installation/requirements/#hardware-requirements\)](https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/installation/requirements/#hardware-requirements).

Deployment Consideration(s)

To further optimize deployment factors, leverage the following practices:

- *Automation*
 - To simplify multiple compute module setups and configurations, leverage the Hewlett Packard Enterprise OneView [SDK for Terraform Provider \(https://github.com/HewlettPackard/terraform-provider-oneview\)](https://github.com/HewlettPackard/terraform-provider-oneview).
- *Availability*

- While the initial deployment only requires a single VM, as noted in later deployment sections, having multiple VMs provides resiliency to accomplish high availability. To reduce single points of failure, it would be beneficial to have the multi-VM deployments spread across multiple hypervisor nodes. So consideration of consistent hypervisor and compute module configurations, with the needed resources for the SUSE Rancher VMs will yield a robust, reliable production implementation.

5.3 SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro

Utilize an enterprise-grade Linux operating system , like SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro, as the base software layer.

Preparation(s)

To meet the solution stack prerequisites and requirements, SUSE operating system offerings, like [SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro \(https://www.suse.com/products/micro/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/micro/)  can be utilized.

1. Ensure these services are in place and configured for this node to use:

- Domain Name Service (DNS) - an external network-accessible service to map IP Addresses to hostnames
- Network Time Protocol (NTP) - an external network-accessible service to obtain and synchronize system times to aid in timestamp consistency
- Software Update Service - access to a network-based repository for software update packages. This can be accessed directly from each node via registration to

- the general, internet-based [SUSE Customer Center \(https://scc.suse.com/login\)](https://scc.suse.com/login) (SCC) or
- an organization's [SUSE Manager \(https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/) infrastructure or
- a local server running an instance of [Repository Mirroring Tool \(https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt) (RMT)



Note

During the node's installation, it can be pointed to the respective update service. This can also be accomplished post-installation with the command-line tool named [SUSEConnect \(https://www.suse.com/support/kb/doc/?id=000018564\)](https://www.suse.com/support/kb/doc/?id=000018564).

Deployment Process

On the compute platform node, install the noted SUSE operating system, by following these steps:

1. Download the [SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro \(https://www.suse.com/download/sle-micro/\)](https://www.suse.com/download/sle-micro/) product (either for the ISO or Virtual Machine image)
2. The installation process is described and can be performed with default values by following steps from the SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro product documentation, see [Installation Quick Start \(https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/single-html/SLE-Micro-installation/#article-installation\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/single-html/SLE-Micro-installation/#article-installation)



Tip

Adjust both the password and the local network addressing setup to comply with local environment guidelines and requirements.

Deployment Consideration(s)

To further optimize deployment factors, leverage the following practices:

- *Automation*

- To reduce user intervention, unattended deployments of SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro can be automated
 - for ISO-based installations, by referring to the [AutoYaST Guide \(https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/single-html/SLE-Micro-autoyast/#book-autoyast\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/single-html/SLE-Micro-autoyast/#book-autoyast) ↗
 - for raw-image based installation, by configuring the Ignition and Combustion tooling as described in the [Installation Quick Start \(https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/single-html/SLE-Micro-installation/#article-installation\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/single-html/SLE-Micro-installation/#article-installation) ↗

5.4 K3s

Utilize an enterprise-grade Linux operating system , like SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro, as the base software layer.

Preparation(s)

To meet the solution stack prerequisites and requirements, SUSE operating system offerings, like [SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro \(https://www.suse.com/products/micro/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/micro/) ↗ can be utilized.

1. Ensure these services are in place and configured for this node to use:
 - Domain Name Service (DNS) - an external network-accessible service to map IP Addresses to hostnames
 - Network Time Protocol (NTP) - an external network-accessible service to obtain and synchronize system times to aid in timestamp consistency
 - Software Update Service - access to a network-based repository for software update packages. This can be accessed directly from each node via registration to

- the general, internet-based [SUSE Customer Center \(https://scc.suse.com/login\)](https://scc.suse.com/login) (SCC) or
- an organization's [SUSE Manager \(https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/) infrastructure or
- a local server running an instance of [Repository Mirroring Tool \(https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt) (RMT)



Note

During the node's installation, it can be pointed to the respective update service. This can also be accomplished post-installation with the command-line tool named [SUSEConnect \(https://www.suse.com/support/kb/doc/?id=000018564\)](https://www.suse.com/support/kb/doc/?id=000018564).

2. Identify the appropriate, supported version of the K3s binary (e.g. vX.YY.ZZ + k3s1), by reviewing the "Rancher Support Matrix" on the [Support and Maintenance Terms of Service \(https://rancher.com/support-maintenance-terms\)](https://rancher.com/support-maintenance-terms) web page.

Deployment Process

The primary steps for deploying this K3s Kubernetes layer are:

1. Set the following variable with the noted version of K3s, as found during the preparation steps.

```
K3s_VERSION=""
```

2. Install the version of K3s with embedded Etcd enabled:

```
curl -sfL https://get.k3s.io | INSTALL_K3S_VERSION=${K3s_VERSION}
INSTALL_K3S_EXEC='server --cluster-init --write-kubeconfig-mode=644' sh -s -
```



Tip

To address *Availability* and possible *scaling* to a multiple node cluster, Etcd is enabled instead of using the default SQLite datastore.

- Monitor the progress of the installation: `watch -c "kubectl get deployments -A"`
 - The deployment is complete when elements of all the deployments (coredns, local-path-provisioner, metrics-server, and traefik) show at least "1" as "AVAILABLE"
 - Then use Ctrl+c to exit the watch loop after all deployment pods are running

Deployment Consideration(s)

To further optimize deployment factors, leverage the following practices:

- *Availability*
 - While a single K3s node works perfectly fine, a full high-availability K3s cluster is recommended for production workloads. The Etcd key/value store (aka database) requires an odd number of nodes be allocated to the K3s plane (aka master nodes). In this case, two additional control-plane nodes should be added; for a total of three.
 1. Deploy the same operating system on the new compute platform nodes, then log into the new nodes as root or as a user with sudo privileges.
 2. Execute the following sets of commands on each of the remaining control-plane nodes:

```
FIRST_SERVER_IP=""      # Private IP preferred, if available
NODE_TOKEN=""           # From the /var/lib/rancher/k3s/server/node-
                        token file on the first server
K3s_VERSION=""          # Match the first of the first server
```

```
curl -sfl https://get.k3s.io | INSTALL_K3S_VERSION=${K3s_VERSION}
K3S_URL=https://${FIRST_SERVER_IP}:6443 K3S_TOKEN=${NODE_TOKEN}
K3S_KUBECONFIG_MODE="644" INSTALL_K3S_EXEC='server' sh -
```

By default, the K3s server nodes are available to run non-control-plane workloads. In this case, the K3s default behavior is perfect for the SUSE Rancher server cluster as it doesn't require additional agent (aka worker) nodes to maintain a highly available SUSE Rancher server application.



Note

This can be changed to the normal Kubernetes default by adding a taint to each server node. See the official Kubernetes documentation for more information on how to do that.

3. (Optional) In cases where agent nodes are desired, execute the following sets of commands on each of the agent nodes to add it to the K3s cluster:

```
FIRST_SERVER_IP=""      # Private IP preferred, if available
NODE_TOKEN=""           # From the /var/lib/rancher/k3s/server/node-
                        token file on the first server
K3s_VERSION=""          # Match the first of the first server
```

```
curl -sfL https://get.k3s.io | INSTALL_K3S_VERSION=${K3s_VERSION}
K3S_URL=https://${FIRST_SERVER_IP}:6443 K3S_TOKEN=${NODE_TOKEN}
K3S_KUBECONFIG_MODE="644" sh -
```

5.5 SUSE Rancher

Utilize an enterprise-grade Linux operating system , like SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro, as the base software layer.

Preparation(s)

To meet the solution stack prerequisites and requirements, SUSE operating system offerings, like [SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro \(https://www.suse.com/products/micro/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/micro/)  can be utilized.

1. Ensure these services are in place and configured for this node to use:

- Domain Name Service (DNS) - an external network-accessible service to map IP Addresses to hostnames
- Network Time Protocol (NTP) - an external network-accessible service to obtain and synchronize system times to aid in timestamp consistency
- Software Update Service - access to a network-based repository for software update packages. This can be accessed directly from each node via registration to

- the general, internet-based [SUSE Customer Center \(https://scc.suse.com/login\)](https://scc.suse.com/login) (SCC) or
- an organization's [SUSE Manager \(https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/) infrastructure or
- a local server running an instance of [Repository Mirroring Tool \(https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt) (RMT)



Note

During the node's installation, it can be pointed to the respective update service. This can also be accomplished post-installation with the command-line tool named [SUSEConnect \(https://www.suse.com/support/kb/doc/?id=000018564\)](https://www.suse.com/support/kb/doc/?id=000018564).

Deployment Process

While logged into the node, as root or with sudo privileges, install SUSE Rancher:

1. Create the Helm Chart custom resource for cert-manager:

- Set the following variable with the desired version of cert-manager

```
CERT_MANAGER_VERSION=""
```



Note

At this time, the most current, supported version of cert-manager is v1.0.4

- Create the cert-manager Helm Chart custom resource manifest

```
cat <<EOF> cert-manager-helm-crd.yaml
apiVersion: helm.cattle.io/v1
kind: HelmChart
metadata:
  name: cert-manager
  namespace: kube-system
spec:
  chart: cert-manager
```

```
targetNamespace: cert-manager
version: ${CERT_MANAGER_VERSION}
repo: https://charts.jetstack.io
EOF
```

- Create the cert-manager CRDs and apply the Helm Chart resource manifest:

```
kubectl create namespace cert-manager
kubectl apply --validate=false -f https://github.com/jetstack/cert-
manager/releases/download/${CERT_MANAGER_VERSION}/cert-manager.crd.yaml
sudo mv cert-manager-helm-crd.yaml /var/lib/rancher/k3s/server/manifests/
```

- Monitor the progress of the installation: watch -c "kubectl get de-
ployments -A"
 - The deployment is complete when all deployments (cert-manager, cert-manager-cainjector, cert-manager-webhook) show at least "1" as "AVAILABLE"
 - Use Ctrl + c to exit the watch loop after all pods are running

2. Create the Helm Chart custom resource for SUSE Rancher:

- Set the following variable to the hostname of the SUSE Rancher server instance

```
HOSTNAME=""
```



Note

This hostname should be resolvable to an IP address of the K3s host, or a load balancer/proxy server that supports this installation of SUSE Rancher.

- Create the SUSE Rancher Helm Chart custom resource manifest

```
cat <<EOF> suse-rancher-helm-crd.yaml
apiVersion: helm.cattle.io/v1
kind: HelmChart
metadata:
  name: rancher
  namespace: kube-system
spec:
  chart: rancher
```

```
targetNamespace: cattle-system
repo: https://releases.rancher.com/server-charts/stable
set:
  hostname: ${HOSTNAME}
EOF
```

- Apply the Helm Chart resource manifest:

```
kubectl create namespace cattle-system
sudo mv suse-rancher-helm-crd.yaml /var/lib/rancher/k3s/server/manifests/
```

- Monitor the progress of the installation: watch -c "kubectl get pods -n cattle-system"
 - The installation is complete when all pods have a status of "Completed" or a status of "Running" with the number of "READY" pods being "1/1", "2/2", etc.
 - Use Ctrl + c to exit the watch loop after all pods are running

3. (Optional) Create an SSH tunnel to access SUSE Rancher:



Note

This optional step is useful in cases where NAT routers and/or firewalls prevent the client web browser from reaching the exposed SUSE Rancher server IP address and/or port. This step requires that a Linux host is accessible through SSH from the client system and that the Linux host can reach the exposed SUSE Rancher service. The SUSE Rancher hostname should be resolvable to the appropriate IP address by the local workstation.

- Create an SSH tunnel through the Linux host to the IP address of the SUSE Rancher server on the NodePort, as noted in Step 3:

```
ssh -N -D 8080 user@Linux-host
```

- On the local workstation web browser, change the SOCKS Host settings to "127.0.0.1" and port "8080"



Note

This will route all traffic from this web browser through the remote Linux host. Be sure to close the tunnel and revert the SOCKS Host settings when you're done.

4. Connect to the SUSE Rancher web UI and configure SUSE Rancher:

- On the client system, use a web browser to connect to the SUSE Rancher service
 - e.g., <https://suse-rancher.sandbox.local>
- Provide a new Admin password



Important

On the second configuration page, ensure the "Rancher Server URL" is set to the hostname specified when creating the SUSE Rancher HelmChart custom resource and the port is 443.

- e.g., suse-rancher.sandbox.local:443

Deployment Consideration(s)

To further optimize deployment factors, leverage the following practices

- *Availability*
 - In instances where a load balancer is used to access a K3s cluster, deploying two additional K3s cluster nodes will automatically make SUSE Rancher highly available.
- *Security*
 - The basic deployment steps described above are for deploying SUSE Rancher with automatically generated, self-signed security certificates. Other options are to have SUSE Rancher create public certificates via Let's Encrypt associated with a publicly resolvable hostname for the SUSE Rancher server, or

to provide preconfigured, private certificates. See SUSE Rancher [product documentation \(https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/installation/install-rancher-on-k8s/#3-choose-your-ssl-configuration\)](https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/installation/install-rancher-on-k8s/#3-choose-your-ssl-configuration) for more information.

- *Integrity*

- This deployment of SUSE Rancher uses the K3s etcd key/value store to persist its data and configuration, which offers several advantages. With a multi-node cluster and this resiliency through replication, having to provide highly-available storage isn't needed. In addition, backing up the K3s etcd store protects the cluster as well as the installation of SUSE Rancher and permits restoration of a given state.

After this successful deployment of the SUSE Rancher solution, review the [product documentation \(https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/\)](https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/) for details on how downstream Kubernetes clusters can be:

- deployed (refer to sub-section "Setting up Kubernetes Clusters in Rancher") or
- imported (refer to sub-section "Importing Existing Clusters"), then
- managed (refer to sub-section "Cluster Administration") and
- accessed (refer to sub-section "Cluster Access") to address orchestration of workload, maintaining security and many more functions are readily available.

6 Summary

Using components and offerings from SUSE and the Rancher portfolio streamlines the ability to quickly and effectively engage in a digital transformation, taking advantage of cloud native resources and disciplines. Using such technology approaches lets you deploy and leverage transformations of infrastructure into a durable, reliable enterprise-grade environment.

Simplify

Simplify and optimize your existing IT environments

- Using SUSE Rancher enables you to simplify Kubernetes cluster deployment and management of the the infrastructure components.

Modernize

Bring applications and data into modern computing

- With SUSE Rancher, the digital transformation to containerized applications can extended, in a distributed computing context, to benefit from the ability both to manage many target clusters, for each of the respective user bases and to facilitate the actual workload deployments.

Accelerate

Accelerate business transformation through the power of open source software

- Given the open source nature of SUSE Rancher and the underlying software components, you can simplify management and make significant IT savings as you scale orchestrated, microservice deployments anywhere you need to and for whatever use cases are needed in an agile and innovative way.

7 References

WHITE PAPERS

- A Buyer's Guide to Enterprise Kubernetes Management Platforms - <https://info.rancher.com/enterprise-kubernetes-management-buyers-guide>
- How to Build an Enterprise Kubernetes Strategy - <https://info.rancher.com/how-to-build-enterprise-kubernetes-strategy>

BOOKS

- Kubernetes Management - <https://info.rancher.com/kubernetes-management-for-dummies-rancher-and-suse-0-0>

TRAINING

- SUSE - <https://training.suse.com/>
- Rancher - <https://rancher.com/training/>

WEBSITES

- SUSE - <https://www.suse.com>
- SUSE Customer Center (SCC) - <https://scc.suse.com/login>
- Products
 - SUSE Rancher - <https://rancher.com/products/rancher/> (documentation (<https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/>))
 - Rancher Kubernetes Engine (RKE) - <https://rancher.com/products/rke/> (documentation (<https://rancher.com/docs/rke/latest/en/>))
 - K3s - <https://rancher.com/products/k3s/> (documentation (<https://rancher.com/docs/k3s/latest/en/>))
 - SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro (SLEMicro) - <https://www.suse.com/products/micro/> (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.0/>))
 - SUSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES) - <https://www.suse.com/products/server/> (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/>))

- SUSE Manager - <https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/> (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/suma/4.1/>))
- SUSE Repository Mirroring Tool (RMT) - <https://www.suse.com/products/server/> (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP2/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt>))
- Projects
 - Rancher Kubernetes Engine Government (RKE2) - <https://github.com/rancher/rke2> (documentation (<https://docs.rke2.io/>))

Glossary

- Document Scope

Reference Configuration

A guide with the basic steps to deploy the layered stack of components from both the SUSE and partner portfolios. This is considered a fundamental basis to demonstrate a specific, tested configuration of components.

Reference Architectures ¹

A guide with the general steps to deploy and validate the structured solution components from both the SUSE and partner portfolios. This provides a shareable template of consistency for consumers to leverage for similar production ready solutions, including design considerations, implementation suggestions and best practices.

Best Practice

Information that can overlap both the SUSE and partner space. It can either be provided as a standalone guide that provides reliable technical information not covered in other product documentation, based on real-life installation and implementation experiences from subject matter experts or complementary, embedded sections within any of the above documentation types describing considerations and possible steps forward.

- Factor(s)

Automation ²

Infrastructure automation enables speed through faster execution when configuring the infrastructure and aims at providing visibility to help other teams across the enterprise work quickly and more efficiently. Automation removes the risk associated with human error, like manual misconfiguration; removing this can decrease downtime and increase reliability. These outcomes and attributes help the enterprise move towards implementing a culture of DevOps, the combined working of development and operations.

¹ link: Reference Architecture (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_architecture) 

² link: Infrastructure-as-Code (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrastructure_as_code) 

Availability³

The probability that an item operates satisfactorily, without failures or downtimes, under stated conditions as a function of its reliability, redundancy and maintainability attributes. Some major objectives to achieve a desired service level objectives are:

- Preventing or reducing the likelihood and frequency of failures via design decisions within the allowed cost of ownership
- Correcting or coping with possible component failures via resiliency, automated failover and disaster-recovery processes
- Estimating and analyzing current conditions to prevent unexpected failures via predictive maintenance

Integrity⁴

Integrity is the maintenance of, and the insurance of the accuracy and consistency of a specific element over its entire lifecycle. Both physical and logical aspects must be managed to ensure stability, performance, re-usability and maintainability.

Security⁵

Security is about ensuring freedom from or resilience against potential harm, including protection from destructive or hostile forces. To minimize risks, one must manage governance to avoid tampering, maintain access controls to prevent unauthorized usage and integrate layers of defense, reporting and recovery tactics.

- Deployment Flavor(s)

Proof-of-Concept⁶

A partial or nearly complete prototype constructed to demonstrate functionality and feasibility for verifying specific aspects or concepts under consideration. This is often a starting point when evaluating a new, transitional technology. Sometimes it starts as a Minimum Viable Product (MVP⁷) that has just enough features to satisfy an

3 link: Availability (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_viable_product) ↗

4 link: Data Integrity (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_integrity) ↗

5 link: Security (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security>) ↗

6 link: Proof of Concept (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proof_of_concept) ↗

7 link: Minimum Viable Product (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_viable_product) ↗

initial set of requests. After such insights and feedback are obtained and potentially addressed, redeployments may be utilized to iteratively branch into other realms or to incorporate other known working functionality.

Production

A deployed environment that target customers or users can interact with and rely upon to meet their needs, plus be operationally sustainable in terms of resource utilization and economic constraints.

Scaling

The flexibility of a system environment to either vertically scale-up, horizontally scale-out or conversely scale-down by adding or subtracting resources as needed. Attributes like capacity and performance are often the primary requirements to address, while still maintaining functional consistency and reliability.

A Appendix

The following sections provide a bill of materials listing for each component layer.

A.1 Compute Platform Bill of Materials

Role	Qty	SKU	Component	Notes
Enclosure	1	FixMe	Hewlett Packard Enterprise Synergy 12000 Frame	
Network	2	FixMe	Hewlett Packard Enterprise Virtual Connect 100Gb SE F32 Module	
Compute Platform	1-3	FixMe	Hewlett Packard Enterprise Synergy SY480 Gen10 Compute Module	Configuration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2x Intel 5218 (16-core, 2.3GHz)• 256GB RAM• 2x 600GB SAS 10k HDD (OS)

Role	Qty	SKU	Component	Notes
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2x 800GB SAS MU SSD (SDS Cache/Flash) 10x 1.8TB SAS 10k HDD (SDS Capacity)

A.2 Software Bill of Materials

Role	Qty	SKU	Component	Notes
Operating System	1-3	874-007864	SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> x86_64, Priority Subscription, 1 Year 	Configuration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> per node (up to 16 cores, stackable)
Kubernetes Management	1	R-0001-PS1	SUSE Rancher,	Configuration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> per instance, includes up to 3

Role	Qty	SKU	Component	Notes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • x86-64, • Priority Subscription, • 1 Year 	Kubernetes nodes
Consulting and Training	1	R-0001-QSO	Rancher Quick Start, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go Live Services 	Terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of client architecture • Bi-weekly cadence calls for 12 weeks • On-demand consulting (24 hours) • Two developer workshops



Note

For the software components, other durations of support terms are also available.

A.3 Documentation Configuration / Attributes

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```
Automation=1@ Availability=1@ FCTR=1@ FLVR=1@ IHV-HPE-Synergy=1@ IHV-HPE=1@ Integrity=1@  
PoC=1@ Production=1@ RC=1@ Scaling=1@ Security=1@ focusRancher=1@ iIHV=1@ layerK3s=1@  
layerSLEMicro=1@ Appendix=1 Arch0v=1 BP=1 BPBV=1 CompMod=1 DepConsiderations=1  
Deployment=1 GFDL=1 Glossary=1 HWComp=1 HWDepCfg=1 LN=1 RA=1 References=1 Requirements=1  
SWComp=1 SWDepCfg=1 env-daps=1 iK3s=1 iRKE1=1 iRKE2=1 iRMT=1 iRancher=1 iSLEMicro=1  
iSLES=1 iSUMa=1
```

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