

Layered Stack Deployment of SUSE Rancher

Integrated with HP (R)

Layered Stack Deployment of SUSE Rancher: Integrated with HP (R)

SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro 5.1, K3s 1.20.14, SUSE Rancher 2.5.12

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview and procedure of implementing SUSE (R) and partner offerings for SUSE 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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<https://documentation.suse.com> 

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1 Introduction

On the digital transformation journey to a full cloud-native landscape, the use 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 de-facto 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

Once on such a digital transformation journey, also relevant to focus on areas like:

Workload(s)

Determine how to manage and launch internally developed containerized, microservice workloads

Kubernetes

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 (CNCF²) conformant and certified³, 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://www.suse.com/products/k3s/>)
- Rancher Kubernetes Engine (RKE (<https://rancher.com/products/rke/>))

¹ <https://kubernetes.io/>


² <https://www.cncf.io/>

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

- Rancher Kubernetes Engine Government (RKE2 (<https://www.suse.com/products/rancher/>) )
- and other Kubernetes clusters that are based upon CNCF certified Kubernetes distributions or installations

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

Compute Platform(s)

To optimize availability, performance, scalability and integrity, assess current system or hosting platforms from Independent Hardware Vendors (IHV), such as [HP](https://www.hp.com/us-en/home.html) (<https://www.hp.com/us-en/home.html>)  ® as the platform for physical, bare metal, 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 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, such as:

Compute Platform

Using the above software application and technology solutions with the Z Workstation platforms offered by HP (<https://www.hp.com/us-en/home.html>)  provides extreme performance for the most-demanding professional workflows and goes beyond powerful processing and graphics, cutting-edge thermal design and unrelenting reliability. Globally recognized for beautiful, inclusive design, HP demonstrates what is possible when we combine passion for design with uncompromising usability and engineering excellence:

- Sustainability - better for people and better for the planet, using recycled plastics²¹, safer materials²² and bulk packaging
- Hardware-enforced security - includes a portfolio of security solutions that are built into the hardware, equipped to help you with a secure foundation that puts protection first
- Reliability - work with confidence knowing your system has undergone 360,000 hours of testing to handle intense workloads, and extreme environments

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:

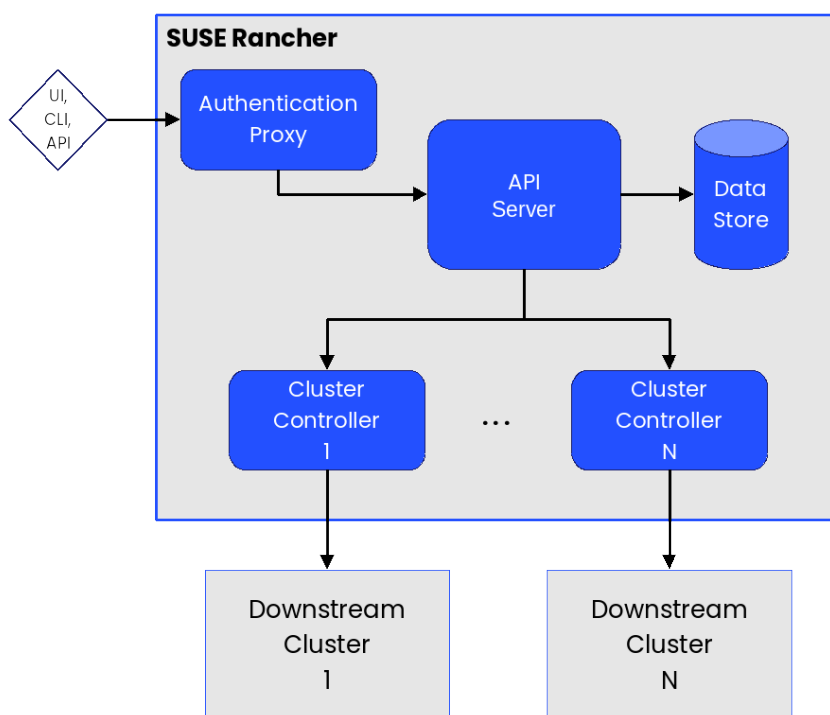


FIGURE 3.1: ARCHITECTURE OVERVIEW - SUSE RANCHER

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 back-end for a user, using 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.

When set up, users can interact with SUSE Rancher through the Web-based user interface (UI), the command line interface (CLI), and programatically 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 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, in the perspective of top to bottom ordering. When completed, the SUSE Rancher instance enables the management of multiple, downstream Kubernetes clusters.

4.1 Component overview

By using:

- Software
 - Multi-cluster Management Server - SUSE Rancher
 - Kubernetes Platform - K3s
 - Linux Operating System - SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro
- Compute Platform
 - HP ZCentral 4R

you 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 Kubernetes native multi-cluster container management platform. It addresses these challenges by delivering the following key functions, as shown in the following figure:

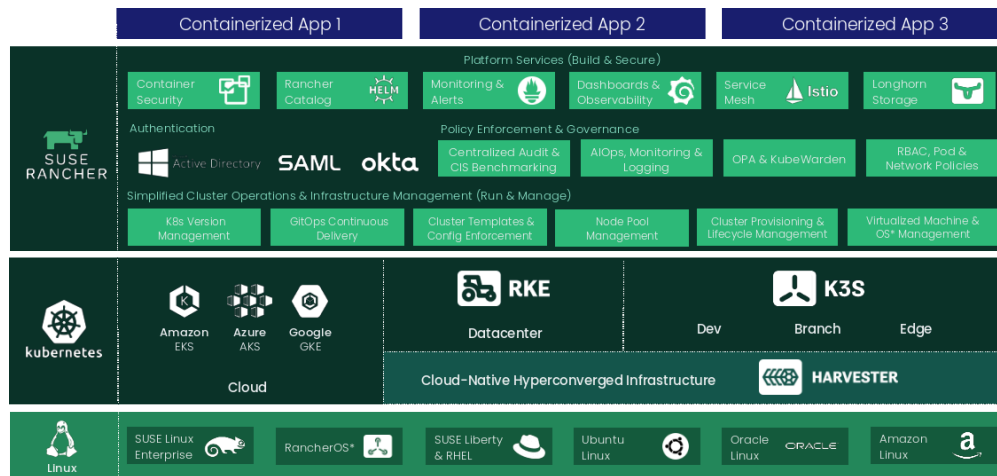


FIGURE 4.1: COMPONENT OVERVIEW - SUSE RANCHER

Certified Kubernetes Distributions

SUSE Rancher supports management of any CNCF certified Kubernetes distribution for:

- development, edge, branch workloads, SUSE offerings like K3s (<https://www.suse.com/products/k3s/>), a CNCF certified lightweight distribution of Kubernetes
- workload infrastructures, either on-premise or public-cloud based, SUSE offerings like Rancher Kubernetes Engine (RKE (<https://rancher.com/products/rke/>)) or Rancher Kubernetes Engine Government (RKE2 (<https://www.suse.com/products/rancher/>)), as CNCF certified Kubernetes distributions for both bare-metal and virtualized servers
- the public cloud, hosted Kubernetes services like
 - Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service (EKS¹),
 - Azure Kubernetes Service (AKS²) and
 - Google Kubernetes Engine (GKE³).

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 integrates and utilizes existing directory services, to automate processes and apply a consistent set of identity and access management (IAM) plus security policies for all the managed clusters, no matter where they are 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, logging, monitoring and service mesh.



Tip

Learn more information about [SUSE Rancher \(https://www.suse.com/products/rancher/\)](https://www.suse.com/products/rancher/) 

For a production implementation of SUSE Rancher, deploying upon a Kubernetes platform is required and 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
- important host utilities such as iptables, socat and du

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

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

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:

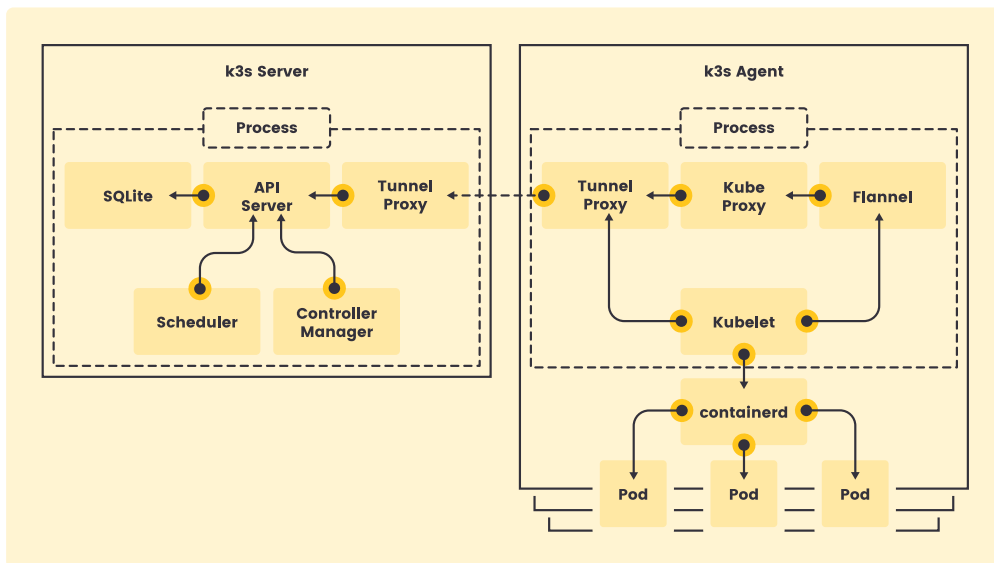


FIGURE 4.2: COMPONENT OVERVIEW - K3S

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.



Tip

Learn more information about K3s (<https://www.suse.com/products/k3s/>) ↗

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 \(https://scc.suse.com\)](https://scc.suse.com).

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:

- Virtual machines on supported hypervisors or hosted on cloud service providers
- Physical, baremetal or single-board computers, either on-premises or hosted by cloud service providers



Note

To complete self-testing of hardware with [SUSE YES Certified Process \(https://www.suse.com/partners/ihv/yes/yes-certified-process\)](https://www.suse.com/partners/ihv/yes/yes-certified-process), you can download and install the respective SUSE operating system support-pack version of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and the YES test suite. Then run the tests per the instructions in the test kit, fixing any problems encountered and when corrected, re-run all tests to obtain clean test results. Submit the test results into the SUSE Bulletin System (SBS) for audit, review and validation.



Tip

Certified systems and hypervisors can be verified via [SUSE YES Certified Bulletins \(https://www.suse.com/yessearch/\)](https://www.suse.com/yessearch/) and then can be leveraged as supported nodes for this deployment, as long as the certification refers to the respective version of the underlying SUSE operating system required.

4.5.1 HP Z Workstation

The [HP Z Workstation \(https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/desktop-workstation-pc.html\)](https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/desktop-workstation-pc.html) portfolio provides extreme performance for the most-demanding professional workflows. But the Z Workstation vision goes beyond powerful processing and graphics, cutting-edge thermal design and unrelenting reliability.

A specific model that offer relevant choices for Enterprise Kubernetes is:

[HP ZCentral 4R \(https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/zcentral-4r.html\)](https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/zcentral-4r.html)

The industry-leading HP ZCentral 4R gives performance in a high-density 1U rack workstation footprint. This slim powerhouse lets you pack in more units — and power. You can maximize your compute investment by centralizing a suite of ZCentral 4R that can be accessed remotely with HP ZCentral software. Plus, software certifications for leading applications come standard, delivering professional reliability and predictable licensing fees.



Note

The HP ZCentral 4R is SUSE YES Certified Hardware.

- Up to 18 cores Intel Xeon W processor: Ensure the highest performance and productivity for your pro-level apps and most challenging projects. Avoid system crashes in the middle of your workflow with Error Correction Code (ECC) memory that detects and corrects soft errors in the memory system on the fly.
- Up to NVIDIA RTX™ A6000 GPU: Reach peak performance with support for one ultra high-end or two mid-tier 18 NVIDIA RTX professional graphics options.
- Up to 256 GB DDR4-2933 SDRAM: Get greater application responsiveness to tackle large workloads with quad-channel architecture providing up to 256 GB of memory.

- Up to 22 TB storage: Access and store massive amounts of data on the fly with three storage bays and dual M.2 slots.
- An aggregated power option: Combine two 675W power supplies that can provide a redundant option, so you will have power to keep you up and running.



Note

A sample bill of materials, in the [Chapter 9, 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 toward *production*, providing *scaling* guidance that is needed to create the solution.

5.1 Deployment overview

The deployment stack is represented in the following figure:

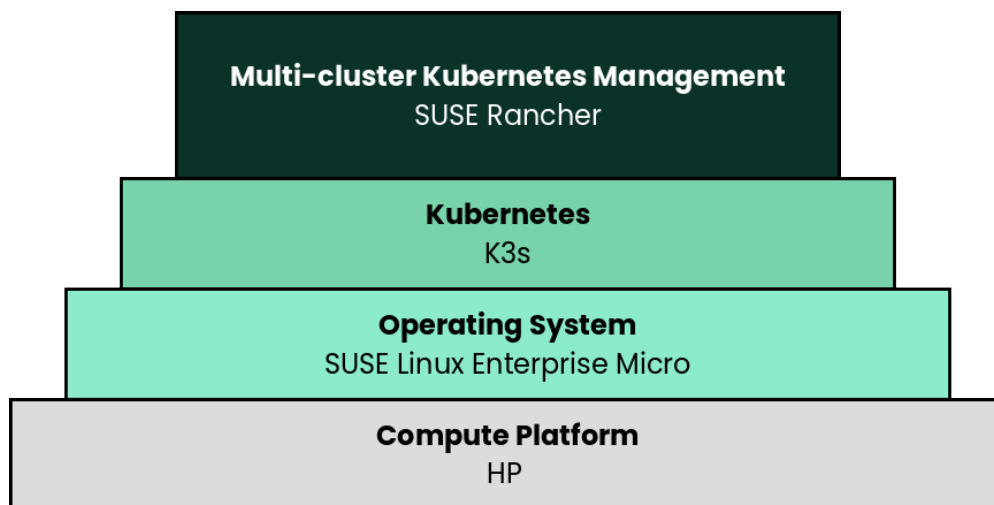


FIGURE 5.1: DEPLOYMENT STACK - SUSE RANCHER

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 HP ZCentral 4R. 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

Kernel-based Virtual Machine (KVM). Another option is to use one or more HP ZCentral 4R baremetal systems for the deployments. For the physical host, there are tools that can be used during the setup of the server, as detailed below.

Preparation(s)

When the system is obtained, connect the network cables and a display monitor, keyboard and mouse to interact with the HP ZCentral 4R.

Deployment Process

On the respective compute module node

1. Given the simplicity of the deployment, the operating system can
 - be installed with the respective SUSE operating system media ISO media,
 - be converted to a USB drive, or
 - leverage Preboot Execution Environment (PXE) infrastructure.
2. For deployments targeting virtual machines, determine if a hypervisor is already available or provisioned.
 - 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 \(https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP3/single-html/SLES-virtualization/#book-virt\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP3/single-html/SLES-virtualization/#book-virt).
 - Then for the solution VM node, use the hypervisor user interface to allocate the necessary CPU, memory, disk and networking as noted in the SUSE Rancher [hardware requirements \(https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/latest/en/installation-and-upgrade/requirements/requirements.html\)](https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/latest/en/installation-and-upgrade/requirements/requirements.html).

Deployment Consideration(s)

To further optimize system resources, leverage the following practice(s):

- *Performance*

- If a Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) is present in the HP ZCentral 4R, include deployment of the respective device driver at the operating system level and potentially obtain any available respective container runtime libraries for cloud-native workloads to access this resource.

5.3 SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro

As the base software layer, use an enterprise-grade Linux operating system. For example, SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro.

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 used.

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 host names
- Network Time Protocol (NTP) - an external network-accessible service to obtain and synchronize system times to aid in time stamp 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 \(https://scc.suse.com\)](https://scc.suse.com) (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 \(https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP3/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP3/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)
 - Identify the appropriate, supported version of SUSE Linux Enterprise Micro by reviewing the support matrix for [SUSE Rancher \(https://www.suse.com/suse-rancher/support-matrix/all-supported-versions/\)](https://www.suse.com/suse-rancher/support-matrix/all-supported-versions/) versions Web page.
2. The installation process is described and can be performed with default values by following steps from the product documentation, see [Installation Quick Start \(https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.5/single-html/SLE-Micro-deployment/#book-deployment-slemicro\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.5/single-html/SLE-Micro-deployment/#book-deployment-slemicro)



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 \(https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.5/single-html/SLE-Micro-autoyast/#book-autoyast\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.5/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 \(https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.5/single-html/SLE-Micro-deployment/#book-deployment-slemicro\)](https://documentation.suse.com/sle-micro/5.5/single-html/SLE-Micro-deployment/#book-deployment-slemicro) ↗

5.4 K3s

Preparation(s)

1. Identify the appropriate, desired version of the K3s binary (for example vX.YY.ZZ + k3s1) by reviewing
 - the "Installing SUSE Rancher on K3s" associated with the respective SUSE Rancher (<https://www.suse.com/suse-rancher/support-matrix/all-supported-versions/>) ↗ version, or
 - the "Releases" on the [Download \(https://github.com/k3s-io/k3s/\)](https://github.com/k3s-io/k3s/) ↗ Web page.
2. For the underlying operating system firewall service, either
 - enable and configure the necessary inbound ports (<https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/k3s/latest/en/reference/resource-profiling.html>) ↗ or
 - stop and completely disable the firewall service.

Deployment Process

Perform the following steps to install the first K3s server on one of the nodes to be used for the Kubernetes control plane

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_SKIP_SELINUX_RPM=true \
  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 K3s deployment is complete when elements of all the deployments (coredns, local-path-provisioner, metrics-server, and traefik) show at least "1" as "AVAILABLE"
 - 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*
 - A full high-availability K3s cluster is recommended for production workloads. The etcd key/value store (aka database) requires an odd number of servers (aka master nodes) be allocated to the K3s cluster. In this case, two additional control-plane servers should be added; for a total of three.
 1. Deploy the same operating system on the new compute platform nodes, then log in to 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:
 - Set the following additional variables, as appropriate for this cluster

```
# Private IP preferred, if available
FIRST_SERVER_IP=""

# From /var/lib/rancher/k3s/server/node-token file on the first
server
NODE_TOKEN=""

# Match the first of the first server
K3s_VERSION=""
```

- Install K3s

```
curl -sfL https://get.k3s.io | \
  INSTALL_K3S_VERSION=${K3s_VERSION} \
  INSTALL_K3S_SKIP_SELINUX_RPM=true \
  K3S_URL=https://${FIRST_SERVER_IP}:6443 \
  K3S_TOKEN=${NODE_TOKEN} \
  K3S_KUBECONFIG_MODE="644" INSTALL_K3S_EXEC='server' \
  sh -
```

- Monitor the progress of the installation: watch -c "kubectl get deployments -A"

- The K3s deployment is complete when elements of all the deployments (coredns, local-path-provisioner, metrics-server, and traefik) show at least "1" as "AVAILABLE"
- Use Ctrl + c to exit the watch loop after all deployment pods are running

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 does not 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.


- (Optional) In cases where agent nodes are desired, execute the following sets of commands, using the same "*K3s_VERSION*", "*FIRST_SERVER_IP*", and "*NODE_TOKEN*" variable settings as above, on each of the agent nodes to add it to the K3s cluster:

```
curl -sfL https://get.k3s.io | \
INSTALL_K3S_VERSION=${K3s_VERSION} \
INSTALL_K3S_SKIP_SELINUX_RPM=true \
K3S_URL=https://${FIRST_SERVER_IP}:6443 \
K3S_TOKEN=${NODE_TOKEN} \
K3S_KUBECONFIG_MODE="644" \
sh -
```

5.5 SUSE Rancher

Preparation(s)

1. For the respective node's firewall service, either
 - enable and configure the necessary inbound ports (https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/latest/en/installation-and-upgrade/requirements/requirements.html#_port_requirements)  or
 - stop and completely disable the firewall service.
2. Determine the desired SSL configuration (<https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/latest/en/installation-and-upgrade/install-kubernetes/install-kubernetes.html>)  for TLS termination

- Rancher-generated TLS certificate NOTE: This is the easiest way of installing SUSE Rancher with self-signed certificates.
 - Let's Encrypt
 - Bring your own certificate
3. Obtain a Helm (<https://helm.sh/docs/intro/install/>)  binary matching the respective Kubernetes version for this SUSE Rancher implementation.



Note

Enable the respective kubeconfig setting for kubectl , K3s - /etc/rancher/k3s/k3s.yml, to be leveraged by helm command.

Deployment Process

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

1. Install 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 v1.5.1

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

```
kubectl apply -f https://github.com/cert-manager/cert-manager/releases/download/${CERT_MANAGER_VERSION}/cert-manager.crd.yaml

# Add the Jetstack Helm repository
helm repo add jetstack https://charts.jetstack.io

# Update your local Helm chart repository cache
helm repo update

# Install the cert-manager Helm chart
helm install cert-manager jetstack/cert-manager \
```

```
--namespace cert-manager \  
--create-namespace \  
--version ${CERT_MANAGER_VERSION}
```

- Check the progress of the installation, looking for all pods to be in running status:

```
kubectl get pods --namespace cert-manager
```

2. Add the SUSE Rancher helm chart repository:

```
helm repo add rancher-stable https://releases.rancher.com/server-charts/stable
```

3. Create a namespace for SUSE Rancher

```
kubectl create namespace cattle-system
```

4. Prepare to use the Helm Chart for SUSE Rancher:

- Set the following variable to the host name of the SUSE Rancher server instance

```
HOSTNAME=""
```



Note

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

- Set the following variable to the number of deployed K3s nodes planned to host the SUSE Rancher service

```
REPLICAS=""
```

- Set the following variable to the desired version of SUSE Rancher server instance

```
RANCHER_VERSION=""
```

- Install the SUSE Rancher Helm Chart

```
helm install rancher rancher-stable/rancher \  
--namespace cattle-system \  

```

```
--set hostname=${HOSTNAME} \  
--set replicas=${REPLICAS} \  
--version=${RANCHER_VERSION}
```

- Monitor the progress of the installation:

```
kubectl -n cattle-system rollout status deploy/rancher
```

5. (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 host name 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 are done.

6. Connect to the SUSE Rancher Web UI:

- On a client system, use a Web browser to connect to the SUSE Rancher service, via HTTPS.
- Provide a new Admin password.



Important

On the second configuration page, ensure the "Rancher Server URL" is set to the host name specified when installing the SUSE Rancher Helm Chart and the port is 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, for a total of three, 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 host name for the SUSE Rancher server, or to provide preconfigured, private certificates.

- *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 is not needed. In addition, backing up the K3s etcd store protects the cluster and 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 \(https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/\)](https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/)  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 \(https://www.suse.com\)](https://www.suse.com) and the Rancher portfolio plus [HP ZCentral 4R \(https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/zcentral-4r.html\)](https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/zcentral-4r.html) Workstations streamline 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 infrastructure components.

Modernize

Bring applications and data into modern computing

- With SUSE Rancher, the digital transformation to containerized applications can be 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 simplify 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://more.suse.com/FY22_Buyers_Guide_to_Enterprise_Container_Management_Buyers-Guide-to-Kubernetes-Management-Platforms.html 
- **How to Build an Enterprise Kubernetes Strategy** - <https://more.suse.com/FY22-global-web-How-to-Build-Enterprise-K8s-Strategy.html> 













BOOKS

- **Kubernetes Management** - <https://more.suse.com/rs/937-DCH-261/images/002022021-DummiesGuide.pdf> 

TRAINING

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

WEB SITES

- **SUSE** - <https://www.suse.com> 
- **SUSE Customer Center (SCC)** - <https://scc.suse.com> 
- **Products**
 - **SUSE Rancher** - <https://www.suse.com/products/rancher/>  (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/cloudnative/rancher-manager/>) 
 - **Rancher Kubernetes Engine (RKE)** - <https://rancher.com/products/rke/>  (documentation (<https://rancher.com/docs/rke/latest/en/>) 
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 - **SUSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES)** - <https://www.suse.com/products/server/>  (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP3/>) 

- SUSE Manager - <https://www.suse.com/products/suse-manager/> (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/suma/4.3/>))
- SUSE Repository Mirroring Tool (RMT) - <https://www.suse.com/products/server/> (documentation (<https://documentation.suse.com/sles/15-SP3/single-html/SLES-rmt/#book-rmt>))
- Projects
 - Rancher Kubernetes Engine Government (RKE2) - <https://github.com/rancher/rke2> (documentation (<https://docs.rke2.io/>))
- HP - <https://www.hp.com/us-en/home.html>
- Z Workstation - <https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/desktop-workstation-pc.html>

8 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 Architectures¹

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 stand-alone 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)

Automation²

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 toward implementing a culture of DevOps, the combined working of development and operations.

¹ link: [Reference Architecture \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_architecture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_architecture) ↗

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

Availability³

The probability that an item operates satisfactorily, without failure or downtime, 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.

Performance⁵

In the context of a system's expected life cycle, performance is an assessment of transactions, responsiveness and underlying stability of the provider technology while doing tuning and adjustments. Other risk factors and discerning potential impacts to surrounding use cases are also integral parts of the profile to address beyond service levels, capacity and problem management.

Security⁶

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)

3 link: [Availability \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Availability\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Availability) ↗

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

5 link: [Performance Engineering \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_engineering\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_engineering) ↗

6 link: [Security \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security) ↗

Proof-of-Concept⁷

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 (MVP⁸) that has just enough features to satisfy an initial set of requests. After such insights and feedback are obtained and potentially addressed, redeployments may be used 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 usage 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.

⁷ link: [Proof of Concept \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proof_of_concept\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proof_of_concept) ↗

⁸ link: [Minimum Viable Product \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_viable_product\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_viable_product) ↗

9 Appendix

The following sections provide a bill of materials listing for the respective component layer(s) of the described deployment.

9.1 Compute platform bill of materials

Sample set of computing platform models, components and resources.

Role	Qty	SKU	Component	Notes
Example 1	1-3		HP Z Workstation ZCentral 4R Linux Ready 1U Rack Workstation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• items below listed per node• skip SKUs, see ZCentral 4R (https://www.hp.com/us-en/workstations/zcentral-4r-configuration.html) ↗
	1		• HP ZCentral 4R Entry Chassis	
	1		• Intel Xeon W-2245 Processor (3.9 GHz, up to 4.5 GHz w/Boost,	

Role	Qty	SKU	Component	Notes
			16.5 MB cache, 2933 MHz, 8 core, 155W)	
	2-4		• 32GB DDR4-2933 DIMM ECC Regis- tered Memory	
	1		• M.2 256 GB HP Z Turbo Drive TLC SSD	
	2-4		• 480 GB SATA En- terprise SSD	
	1		• NVIDIA RTX A2000 (6 GB GDDR6 ECC, 4 x Mini DisplayPort 1.4) Blower Fan Graphics	
	1		• Remote Boost 2020 Software for Z Workstation	
	1		• USB 320K Key- board	
	1		• Wired 320M Mouse	
	1		• ZCentral 4R Rail Rack Kit	

9.2 Software bill of materials

Sample set of software, support and services.

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, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • x86-64, • Priority Subscription, • 1 Year 	Configuration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • per deployed instance
Rancher Management	2	R-0004-PS1	Rancher 10 Nodes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • x86-64 or aarch64, • Priority Subscription, • 1 Year, 	Configuration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires priority server subscription
Consulting and Training	1	R-0001-QSO	Rancher Quick Start, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go Live Services 	



Note

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

9.3 Documentation configuration / attributes

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```
Appendix=1 Arch0v=1 Automation=1 Availability=1 BP=1 BPBV=1 CompMod=1 DepConsiderations=1
Deployment=1 FCTR=1 FLVR=1 GFDL=1 Glossary=1 HWComp=1 HWDepCfg=1 IHV-HPQ-ZCentral4R=1
IHV-HPQ=1 Integrity=1 LN=1 Performance=1 PoC=1 Production=1 RA=1 RC=1 References=1
Requirements=1 SWComp=1 SWDepCfg=1 Scaling=1 Security=1 docdate=2022-09-15 env-daps=1
focusRancher=1 iIHV=1 iK3s=1 iRKE1=1 iRKE2=1 iRMT=1 iRancher=1 iSLEMicro=1 iSLES=1
iSUMa=1 layerK3s=1 layerSLEMicro=1
```

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