MICROGRID CONTROL SYSTEM

1. Field

The present disclosure relates generally to power grids and, in particular, to a method, apparatus, and computer program product for managing microgrids. Still more particularly, the present disclosure relates to a method, apparatus, and computer program product for an adaptable microgrid robust control system.

2. Background:

Currently, most electric power is generated by macrogrids. Macrogrids typically are large, centralized power plants, such as nuclear power plants, hydroelectric plants, and fossil fuel powered plants. Macrogrids commonly have good economies of scale. However, macrogrids frequently require power to be transmitted across long distances. These large facilities frequently generate power using non-renewable sources of energy, such as coal or gas. These facilities may negatively impact the environment.

A microgrid is a localized grouping of electric power generation sources and loads. A microgrid may also be referred to as, without limitation, a smart-grid, mini-grid, or virtual power plant. However, existing microgrid control systems tend to be overly complex and under-utilize renewable resources.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to have a method and apparatus that takes into account one or more of the issues discussed above, as well as other issues.

SUMMARY

In one advantageous embodiment, a method is provided for configuring a microgrid. A first configuration of the microgrid having a set of microgrid elements is initialized. An address for each element in the set of microgrid elements of the microgrid is verified. In response to receiving status data from the set of microgrid elements connected in a peer-to-peer network indicating a reconfiguration of the microgrid, the set of microgrid elements is re-aligned to form a second grid configuration. The second grid configuration is executed.

In another advantageous embodiment, a method for monitoring a microgrid is provided. Status data is received from a set of microgrid controller elements connected in a peer-to-peer network connecting the set of microgrid controller elements within the microgrid local area network. In response to the status data indicating a change in the microgrid that exceeds a threshold level, the set of microgrid controller elements and a set of tasks associated with the set of microgrid controller elements is re-aligned to form a re-aligned microgrid configuration. The re-aligned microgrid configuration is executed.

In yet another advantageous embodiment, an apparatus comprises a microgrid and a microgrid controller associated with the microgrid configured to initialize a first configuration of a microgrid having a set of microgrid elements. The microgrid controller is configured to verify an address for each element in the set of elements of the microgrid. The microgrid controller is configured to re-align the set of elements to form a second grid configuration in response to receiving status data from the set of microgrid elements connected in a peer-to-peer network indicating a reconfiguration of the microgrid. The microgrid controller is configured to execute the second grid configuration.

The features, functions, and advantages can be achieved independently in various embodiments of the present disclosure or may be combined in yet other embodiments in which further details can be seen with reference to the following description and drawings.

The apparatus used, wherein the microgrid controller is further configured to perform a live test of the first configuration, wherein the live test comprises pinging the each element in the set of microgrid elements.

The apparatus used, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and further comprising:

a set of controller elements, wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a controller network connecting each element in the set of controller elements to form a peer-to-peer controller network within the microgrid local area network

An apparatus further comprising:

a first controller element in the set of controller elements, wherein the first controller element is configured to send controller status data generated by the first controller element to a second controller element in the set of microgrid controller elements using the controller network.

An apparatus , wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and further comprising:

a set of processors, wherein the peer-to-peer network comprises a processor network connecting each distributed energy resource processor in the set of processors to form a peer-to-peer processor network within the microgrid local area network.

An apparatus further comprising:

a first processor in the set of processors configured to send processor status data generated by the first processor to a second processor in the set of processors using the processor network.

An apparatus further comprising:

a single common redundant network port for Internet access to a microgrid local area network, wherein a remote client can access the microgrid local area network through the single common redundant network port, , wherein a set of cyber-security methods and tools are implemented on the single, common redundant network port; and wherein the single common redundant network port is configured to permit remote clients access to status data and deny remote clients access to control functions associated with the microgrid.

A computer program product, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a controller network and further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for connecting each controller element in the set of microgrid elements in the peer-to-peer controller network within the local area network; and

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending the status data generated by a first controller element on the microgrid to a second controller

element in the set of microgrid elements using the controller network.

A computer program product, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network, wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a processor network connecting each distributed energy resource processor in a set of cluster processors in the peer-to-peer network within the microgrid local area network, and further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending status data generated by a first cluster processor on the microgrid to a second cluster processor in the set of cluster processors using the processor network.

A computer program product further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for permitting remote clients using an Internet connection to access the microgrid local area network only through a single, common redundant network port, wherein a set of cyber-security methods and tools are implemented on the single, common redundant network port;

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for permitting the remote clients to access the status data and load data associated with the microgrid; and

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for denying the remote clients access to control functions associated with the microgrid.

A computer program product further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending the status data generated by a controller element within the set of microgrid elements to a set of distributed energy resource processors on the microgrid using

the peer-to-peer local area network; and program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending the status data generated by a distributed energy cluster processor to every processor in the set of distributed energy resource.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the advantageous embodiments are set forth in the appended claims. The advantageous embodiments, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an advantageous embodiment of the present disclosure when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is an illustration of a data processing environment for a microgrid control system in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 2 is an illustration of a microgrid in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 3 is an illustration of a microgrid control center in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 4 is an illustration of a distributed energy resource cluster in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 5 is an illustration of a data processing system in accordance with an advantageous embodiment;

Figure 6 is an illustration of a flowchart of a process for managing a microgrid in accordance with an advantageous embodiment; and

Figure 7 is an illustration of a flowchart of a process for configuring a microgrid in accordance with an advantageous embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference now to the figures and in particular with reference to **Figure 1**, an illustrative diagram of a data processing environment for a microgrid control system is provided in which illustrative embodiments may be implemented. It should be appreciated that **Figures 1-5** are only provided as illustrations of data processing environments for the depicted implementations in **Figures 1-5** and are not intended to imply any limitations with regard to the environments in which different embodiments may be implemented. Many modifications to the depicted environments may be made.

Figure 1 depicts a pictorial representation of a network of data processing systems in which advantageous embodiments may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** is a network of computers in which the advantageous embodiments may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** contains network **102**, which is the medium used to provide communications links between various devices and computers connected together within network data processing system **100**. Network **102** may include connections, such as wire, wireless communication links, or fiber optic cables.

In the depicted example, server computer **104** and server computer **106** connect to network **102** along with storage unit **108**. In addition, client computers **110**, **112**, and **114** connect to network **102**. Client computers **110**, **112**, and **114** may be, for example, personal computers or network computers. In the depicted example, server computer **104** provides information, such as boot files, operating system images, and applications to client computers **110**, **112**, and **114**. Client computers **110**, **112**, and **114** are clients to server computer **104** in this example. Network data processing system **100** may include additional server computers, client computers, and other devices not shown.

Program code located in network data processing system **100** may be stored on a computer recordable storage medium and downloaded to a data processing system or other device for use. For example, program code may be stored on a computer recordable storage medium on server computer **104** and downloaded to client computer **110** over network **102** for use on client computer **110**.

[0001] In the depicted example, network data processing system **100** is the Internet with network **102** representing a worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes, or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, governmental, educational, and other computer systems that route data and messages. Of course, network data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as, for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area network (WAN).

Microgrid control center **116** is a workstation that manages, control, and monitors the elements in microgrid **118**. In this example, microgrid control center **116** is located remotely from microgrid **118**. However, in another embodiment, microgrid control center **116** may be located locally to microgrid **118**.

Microgrid **118** is an electric energy generation network having set of distributed energy resources **120**. Set of distributed energy resources **120** is a set of one or more distributed energy resources.

A distributed energy resource may be a small scale power generation element, such as, without limitation, a wind turbine, photovoltaic system, a fuel cell, a geothermal power generator, microturbine, combustion turbine, reciprocating engine, hybrid system, combined heat and power, or a hydroelectric power generator.

Figure 1 is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the different illustrative embodiments.

The different advantageous embodiments recognize and take into account a number of different considerations. For example, the different advantageous embodiments recognize and take into account that current microgrid power systems are centralized and face increasing challenges from the number of control variables and the complexity of the microgrid system due to changes to dynamic environments. The advantageous embodiments recognize that current, centralized microgrid control systems require software that is increasingly complex and extended in size due to the complex and dynamic environments of these systems.

The different advantageous embodiments recognize and take into account that distributed energy resources in a microgrid reduces the amount of energy lost in transmission by generating power at or near where the power is used. This reduces the size and number of power lines. The different advantageous embodiments recognize and take into account that distributed energy resources are smaller scale power generation resources that frequently utilizes renewable energy sources.

The different advantageous embodiments also recognize and take into account that current microgrid control systems have accessibility which requires only a tier wall of security to overcome. This creates security risks and vulnerability to hackers and other security breaches.

The different advantageous embodiments recognize and take into account that it would be advantageous to provide a robust microgrid control system that increases the use of renewable energy sources, distributed generation, energy storage, and power quality with uninterruptible power supply and network health management capabilities.

The different advantageous embodiments also recognize and take into account that it would be advantageous to provide a

microgrid control system with cyber security at multiple levels to provide additional security.

Thus, the different advantageous embodiments provide a method, apparatus, and computer program product for configuring a microgrid. In one embodiment, a first configuration of a microgrid having a set of microgrid elements is initialized. The set of microgrid elements is a set having two or more microgrid elements. The set of microgrid elements may include, without limitation, distributed energy resource sensor(s), distributed energy resource controller element(s), processor(s), and network element(s). A network element may include, without limitation, router(s), server(s), and distributed energy resource(s).

An Internet protocol address for each element in the set of microgrid elements of the microgrid is verified. An average load and a common load associated with the set of microgrid elements is identified.

Status data from the set of microgrid elements connected in a peer-to-peer network within a microgrid local area network is received. The status data is data indicating the health of a microgrid element, a load associated with a distributed energy resource, a state of a microgrid element. The status data indicating a load associated with a distributed energy resource may describe a power demand at a given time, electric power output at a given time, an amount of electric power in battery storage, and/or power generation efficiency over a given period of time.

In response to the status data indicating a reconfiguration of the microgrid, the set of microgrid elements is re-aligned to form a second grid configuration. As used herein, the term re-align refers to changing one or more task(s) associated with a microgrid element, changing a load associated with a distributed energy resource, and/or changing relationships between elements

and distributed energy resources within a microgrid to create a new configuration.

Re-aligning the set of elements may include changing a set of tasks to be performed by a given element, re-designating a function of a given element, or activating a redundant element to replace a failed element. For example, re-aligning a set of microgrid elements may include changing a master processor to a slave processor, changing a slave processor to a master processor, increasing a load on a given distributed energy resource, decreasing a load on a given distributed energy resource, adding a distributed energy resource to the microgrid, removing a distributed energy resource from the microgrid, adding a controller element to the microgrid, removing or replacing a controller element, re-assigning a function of a first controller element to a second controller element, or any other change in the tasks and relationships between microgrid elements.

The second grid configuration is executed to enable the microgrid to continue producing power using the re-aligned set of elements in the second grid configuration. For example, if re-aligning the set of elements included assigning a first processor to act as a master processor and a second processor to act as a slave processor, when the second grid configuration is executed, the first processor begins performing the tasks associated with the master processor and the second processor begins performing the tasks assigned to the slave processor.

With reference now to **Figure 2**, an illustration of a microgrid is shown in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Microgrid **200** is a localized grouping of electricity generating resources and loads within power generation environment **201**. Microgrid **200** may be a microgrid, such as, without limitation, microgrid **118** in **Figure 1.**

Microgrid **200** comprises one or more distributed energy resources, such as, without limitation, distributed energy

resources (DERs) **202, 204, 206 and 208**. In this advantageous embodiment, microgrid **200** is connected to four distributed energy resources, however, microgrid **200** may be connected to only a single distributed energy resource, two distributed energy resources, three distributed energy resources, as well as, five or more distributed energy resources.

Distributed energy resources **202, 204, 206,** and **208** may be implemented as any type of distributed energy resources. In the embodiment shown in **Figure 2,** microgrid **200** comprises wind turbine(s), photovoltaic cell(s), energy storage resource(s), and diesel generator(s). However, microgrid **200** may also be implemented using any other type of known or available distributed energy resources. In another advantageous embodiment, microgrid **200** may optionally also be connected to a central utility.

Each distributed energy resource on microgrid **200** can be installed or disconnected without interrupt to microgrid **200** performances and/or power output. Each distributed energy resource on microgrid **200** is autonomous. Each distributed energy resource integrated into microgrid **200** has the ability to collaborate and/or communicate with other microgrid elements to perform specific tasks.

Microgrid **200** comprises set of controller elements **209**. As used herein, the term "set" refers to one or more items, unless defined otherwise herein. As shown in **Figure 2**, set of controller elements **209** is a set of one or more controller elements. Thus, set of controller elements **209** may include a single controller element, as well as, two or more controller elements.

A controller element in set of controller elements **209** may be a distributed energy resource controller, a sensor, or a network element. For example, a controller element may be, without limitation, a charge controller, a switch, an inverter, a router, a server, a processor, a voltage monitor, an ampere

monitor, a load bank, a distributed energy resource control panel, a battery bank control, automatic transfer switch, router, processor, Ethernet switch, or universal protocol converter.

In this example, set of controller elements **209** includes without limitation, set of photovoltaic (PV) switches **210**, combiner **212,** inverter **214**, wind turbine (WT) charge controller **216**,and PC server **218**. Set of controller elements **209** may also include Internet router **220**.

The microgrid controller elements shown in **Figure 2** are only examples of some possible controller elements that may be included in microgrid **200.** Microgrid **200** may not include all of the controller elements shown in **Figure 2.** Likewise, microgrid **200** may include other additional controller elements not shown in **Figure 2**.

Microgrid local area network **222** is a local area network connecting the set of controller elements in microgrid **200**. In the example shown in **Figure 2**, microgrid local area network **222** connects distributed energy resources **202, 204, 206,** and **208** with the controller elements having an internet protocol (IP) address in a peer-to-peer network within microgrid local area network **222**. In this manner, microgrid local area network **222** permits each controller element in microgrid **200** to transmit status information for that controller element to other controller elements on microgrid **200**.

A user at a remote client may connect to microgrid local area network **222** and obtain status and/or load information associated with distributed energy resources and controller elements on microgrid **200** by connecting to microgrid local area network **222** through internet router **220.**

Internet router **220** provides a single, common redundant network port. In other words, Internet router **220** acts as a gate controlling remote Internet access to microgrid local area

network **222** and any components connected to microgrid local area network **222.**

A set of cyber-security methods and tools may be applied to Internet router **220.** In other words, a set of cyber-security methods and tools may be implemented on the single, redundant network port at Internet router **220.**

The set of cyber-security methods and tools may be a set having a single cyber-security method and/or tool, as well as a set having multiple different cyber-security methods and tools. The cyber-security methods and tools in set of cyber-security methods and tools may include any known or available cyber-security method and/or cyber-security tool that is currently available or may become available in future.

Thus, Internet router **220** provides a single point of access to microgrid local area network **222** that only permits a remote client to obtain limited information and/or access to microgrid local area network **222**, such as status data and/or load data. The remote client may be a client connecting to microgrid local area network **222** from wide area network **224,** such as the Internet.

The microgrid elements of microgrid **200** may be tied to microgrid local area network **222.** The microgrid elements of this architecture cannot access the Internet except through microgrid internet router **220**, which is a common redundant port controlled by microgrid local area network **222**.

Internet access to microgrid local area network **222** may be encrypted and secured.

In this example, a user accessing microgrid local area network **222** from the Internet can only access status data and load measurement information.

Microgrid **200** has a distributed architecture that may utilize cyber security at every tier or level of controllability. Microgrid control center **226** is a control work station within power generation environment **201** that monitors

the health and status of controller elements and distributed energy resources associated with microgrid **200**. Microgrid control center **226** may be implemented as a microgrid control center, such as microgrid control center **116** in **Figure 1**.

Microgrid control center **226** monitors the health and status of microgrid elements by receiving status data **228** from each microgrid element in real-time. Status data **228** indicates the power output by distributed energy resource(s) on microgrid **200,** power demands on microgrid **200,** and the functional or operational status of microgrid elements.

If status data **228** indicates a failure or decreased output in a first distributed energy resource, the load associated with the first distributed energy resource may be re-assigned to a second distributed energy resource. For example, if a photovoltaic cell(s) produces less energy than expected due to an overcast, cloudy sky, the load for that photovoltaic cell(s) can be shifted to a wind turbine or a diesel generator. In addition, re-configuring microgrid **200** to shift loads to different distributed energy resources and/or re-assigning tasks to different microgrid elements permits installation of a third distributed energy resource into microgrid **200** and/or removal of the first distributed energy resource from microgrid **200** for repair or replacement without disrupting power generation and functioning of microgrid **200**. In other words, microgrid **200** can be re-configured to compensate for changes in performance, output or function of individual elements of microgrid **200** with little or no disruption to the overall function, performance, and power output produced by microgrid **200**.

Figure 2 is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the different advantageous embodiments. For example, in **Figure 2** microgrid control center **226** is depicted as being located remotely to microgrid **200**. However, in another advantageous embodiment, microgrid control center **226** may be located locally to microgrid **200**.

In addition, as shown in **Figure 2,** power generation environment **201** comprises a microgrid and a microgrid control center **226**. However, in another advantageous embodiment, power generation environment **201** may also include an electric power utility macrogrid. In this example, microgrid **200** may be connected to and/or slaved to the electric power utility macrogrid.

Figure 3 is an illustration of a microgrid control center in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Microgrid control center **300** is a workstation that manages a microgrid.

Microgrid control center **300** may include microgrid controller **302**, database **304**, and router **306**.

Microgrid controller **302** is a data processing system that configures distributed energy resources and controller elements in a microgrid, monitors the status and loads associated with the distributed energy resources and controller elements in the microgrid, and re-aligns the controller elements to compensate for element failures.

Database **304** is a redundant database for data storage associated with managing the microgrid. In these examples database **304** may be implemented as a database located on redundant array of independent disks (RAID). Database **304** may be rack mounted.

Router **306** in this example is a network router that establishes a first level network between microgrid control center **300** and the distributed energy resources in the microgrid. Distributed energy resource clusters **308, 309,** and **310** are clusters of one or more distributed energy resources associated with the microgrid. In this example, the microgrid includes three distributed energy resource clusters. However, the microgrid may include any number of distributed energy resource clusters, such as a single distributed energy resource cluster, two distributed energy resource clusters, as well as four or more distributed resource clusters.

The set of controller elements **312, 313,** and **314** is a set having at least one of a distributed energy resource sensor, a distributed energy resource controller, and a local area network element associated with the microgrid. Further, as used herein, the phrase "at least one of", when used with a list of items, means that different combinations of one or more of the listed items may be used and only one of each item in the list may be needed. For example, "at least one of item A, item B, and item C" may include, for example, without limitation, item A or item A and item B. This example also may include item A, item B, and item C or item B and item C.

Network **316** is a microgrid controller network connecting microgrid control center **300** with the microgrid local area network connecting the distributed energy resources and controller elements. Network **316** in this example is a wide area network connecting a remote microgrid control center **300** with the microgrid. However, in another advantageous embodiment, network **316** may connect a local microgrid controller and local database with the microgrid local area network.

In this example, network **316** may be a microgrid control center network utilizing transmission control protocol/internet protocol (TCP/IP) and user datagram protocol (UDP).

Microgrid control process **318** is a process by which microgrid controller **302** utilizes network **316** to initialize the microgrid system, configure the distributed energy resources and controller elements, determine the average load and local loads associated with the microgrid elements, and monitor the status of microgrid elements.

If microgrid control process **318** identifies a threshold level of change associated with a microgrid controller element or load, control process **318** initiates reconfigurations and/or re-alignments of microgrid elements and resources as necessary to compensate and permit uninterrupted power supply to end users. A threshold level of change associated with a microgrid

element may occur due to a controller element failure, an increase in power demand, or a decrease in power production from one or more distributed energy resources.

The microgrid may also include multiple tiers of cyber security. In other words, rather than relying upon a single tier of security, the microgrid shown in **Figure 3** may include multiple tiers of cyber security at every level of controllability, including, but not limited to, cyber security at the microgrid control center **300** level, cyber security at the distributed energy resource cluster **308-310** level, and cyber security at the controller element level.

Figure 3 is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the different advantageous embodiments.

Turning now to **Figure 4,** an illustration of a distributed energy resource cluster is shown in accordance with an advantageous embodiment.

Distributed energy resource cluster **400** is a grouping of one or more distributed energy resources. Each distributed energy resource cluster in the microgrid has at least one processor associated with the distributed energy resource cluster. In this example, distributed energy resource cluster **400** is a grouping of one or more distributed energy resource s associated with processor **402.**

Processor **402** may be either a master processor or a slave processor. A master processor may be re-designated as a slave processor as needed. Likewise, a slave processor may be re-designated as a master processor.

The master processor may synchronize microgrid elements and/or provide a robust power bus with no down times. A distributed energy resource processor, whether designated a master or slave, may manage elements in distributed energy resource cluster **400**, such as controller elements, network elements, and distributed energy resources.

For example, but without limitation, processor **402** may have the ability to control photovoltaic combiner switch(es), photovoltaic panel(s), direct current bus switch(es), wind turbine charge regulator(s), power inverter(s) and power regulator(s). Processor **402** may have the ability to measure energy harvest, maximize direct current power generation, maximize energy storage, prioritize loads, assign shared loads to slave elements, and synchronize electricity generated with the power interface voltage and/or frequency. Processor **402** may have the ability to control energy harvest and load shedding. Processor **402** may also have the ability to maintain power quality on linear and non-linear loads, adjust local load demand, and configure local setup procedures and system initial configuration.

In this illustrative example, processor network **404** is a peer-to-peer network connecting two or more distributed energy resource cluster processors in the microgrid, such as processor **402**, together in a peer-to-peer network. In this example, processor network **404** connects processor **402** of distributed energy resource cluster **400** with the processor associated with distributed energy resource cluster **406** and distributed energy resource cluster **408.** Processor network **404** enables processor **402** to exchange status information, load information, and other data with distributed energy resource clusters **406** and **408,** as well as any other distributed energy resource clusters on the microgrid having a processor connected to processor network **404.**

Controller elements **410, 412, 414**, and **416** are distributed energy resource sensors and controllers associated with distributed energy resource cluster **400**. Controller elements **410, 412, 414**, and **416** may be any type of distributed energy resource sensors and controllers, such as, but without limitation, an inverter, volt/amp monitor, automatic transfer switch, load bank, battery bank control, distributed energy

resource control panel, a charge controller, or any other type of controller, sensor, or network element.

Controller elements **410, 412, 414**, and **416** are connected together in a peer-to-peer controller network **418.** Controller network **418** may be a redundant ring network using the transmission control protocol/internet protocol and user datagram protocol protocols. The ring network may be an Ethernet network. A redundant ring network disables one leg of the ring when a failure occurs. The redundant ring may function as a C-ring.

Controller network **418** comprises switches **420, 422, 424, 426, 428, 430**, and **432**. Each switch in controller network **418** connects to exactly two other switches to from a continuous pathway for signals through each managed Ethernet switch.

In this example, switches **420, 422, 424, 426, 428, 430**, and **432** are, without limitation, managed Ethernet switches. Switches may be dedicated Internet network (DIN) rail mounted components. The processors, such as processor **402**, may also optionally be dedicated Internet network rail mounted.

Controller network **418** may utilize a counter-rotating ring to form a redundant ring network topology. A single leg failure between two Ethernet switches causes only a small initial delay in controller network **418** at the time of the Ethernet switch failure.

Each controller element that requires access to network processors on processor network **404** is connected to a managed Ethernet switch in distributed energy resource cluster **400**. If a managed Ethernet switch fails, all controller elements connected to that Ethernet switch are isolated from the network.

In this example, every managed Ethernet switch is connected to a single controller element in distributed energy resource cluster **400.** In other words, each controller element is connected to its own Ethernet switch in controller network **418.** In this example, if a single Ethernet switch fails, only the

microgrid element attached to that failed Ethernet switch will be cut off from the network. However, in another advantageous embodiment, a managed Ethernet switch may be connected to two or more controller elements.

In Each controller element connected to an Ethernet switch may use the transmission control protocol/internet protocol and user datagram protocol interface protocol. A controller element may be connected to a protocol converter to convert the protocol of the controller element into the protocol of the Ethernet switches.

As shown in **Figure 4**, controller elements **410, 412, 414,** and **416** and their associated Ethernet switches **420**, **422, 424,** and **426** are connected to a universal protocol converter, such as universal protocol converters **434, 436, 438, 440**, and **442.** Universal protocol converters **434, 436, 438, 440**, and **442** convert the protocols used by the controller elements into the protocol used by the managed Ethernet switches. Universal protocol converters **434**, **436**, **438**, **440**, and **442** also convert the protocol used by a given Ethernet switch into the protocol used by the controller element connected to that given Ethernet switch.

Routers **444** and **446** may be implemented as one or more router devices that interconnect controller network **418** with processor network **404.** Routers **444** and **446** may also be utilized to connect control center network **448** with processor network **404** and controller network **418**.

Control center network **448** is a top level network connecting microgrid control center **450** with the microgrid processor network **404.** Microgrid control center **450** is a workstation for configuring the microgrid and monitoring the health of the distributed energy resources associated with the microgrid, such as microgrid control center **116** in **Figure 1,** microgrid control center **226** in **Figure 2**, and **300** in **Figure 3**.

Control center network **448**, processor network **404,** and controller network **418** is the microgrid control, communications, and command network for monitoring, controlling, configuring, and re-configuring microgrid elements. Each of control center network **448,** processor network **404,** and controller network **418** may have a ring topology using managed Ethernet switches. In this manner, any open network line or failed Ethernet switch will not have a negative impact on operation of the remainder of the microgrid elements.

Any processor can obtain status data from any controller element, distributed energy resource, or other processor connected to the peer-to-peer network.

Thus, the distributed energy resource cluster processors, control center network **448**, processor network **404**, and controller network **418** reduce the complexity of a microgrid control system by providing the network elements the intelligence and communication capabilities with one or more other microgrid elements.

This allows each microgrid element to know the state of its subsystem or load its controls. This information is communicated to other microgrid elements, which makes the status of neighboring systems within the microgrid known to each distributed energy resource cluster. In this manner, the distributed energy generation and storage capabilities of the microgrid system are increased. Likewise, a single microgrid element failure will not disable or prevent other microgrid elements from operating.

Moreover, control center network **448**, controller network **418**, and processor network **404** enable the transfer of information between distributed energy resources, microgrid control center **450,** processors, and external communication links.

A set of cyber security methods and tools may be implemented at multiple different levels of the microgrid shown

in **Figure 4.** For example, cyber security methods and tools may be implemented on a level associated with at least one of an individual controller element **410**, a set of controller elements, all controller elements associated with a distributed energy resource, an individual distributed energy resource, a given distributed energy resource cluster, processor **402**, microgrid control center **450**, processor network **404**, controller network **418**, control center network **448**, or any other level of a distributed microgrid architecture. Thus, cyber security may be implemented within multiple different levels using multiple different cyber security methods and/or tools.

Figure 4 is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the different advantageous embodiments.

Turning now to **Figure 5**, an illustration of a data processing system is depicted in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. Data processing system **500** may be a data processing system associated with a microgrid control center. Data processing system **500** may be associated with one or more distributed energy resources, controller elements, or control center in a microgrid or power generation environment. For example, and without limitation, microgrid control center **116** in **Figure 1,** microgrid control center **226** in **Figure 2,** PC server **218** in **Figure 2**, microgrid controller **302** in **Figure 3,** processor **402** in **Figure 4**, and/or microgrid control center **450** in **Figure 4** may be implemented using data processing system **500**.

In this illustrative example, data processing system **500** includes communications fabric **502**, which provides communications between processor unit **504**, memory **506**, persistent storage **508**, communications unit **510**, input/output (I/O) unit **512**, and display **514**.

Processor unit **504** serves to execute instructions for software that may be loaded into memory **506**. Processor unit **504** may be a number of processors, a multi-processor core, or some

other type of processor, depending on the particular implementation. A number, as used herein with reference to an item, means one or more items. Further, processor unit **504** may be implemented using a number of heterogeneous processor systems in which a main processor is present with secondary processors on a single chip. As another illustrative example, processor unit **504** may be a symmetric multi-processor system containing multiple processors of the same type.

Memory **506** and persistent storage **508** are examples of storage devices **516**. A storage device is any piece of hardware that is capable of storing information, such as, for example, without limitation, data, program code in functional form, and/or other suitable information either on a temporary basis and/or a permanent basis. Storage devices **516** may also be referred to as computer readable storage devices in these examples. Memory **506**, in these examples, may be, for example, a random access memory or any other suitable volatile or non-volatile storage device. Persistent storage **508** may take various forms, depending on the particular implementation.

For example, persistent storage **508** may contain one or more components or devices. For example, persistent storage **508** may be a hard drive, a flash memory, a rewritable optical disk, a rewritable magnetic tape, or some combination of the above. The media used by persistent storage **508** also may be removable. For example, a removable hard drive may be used for persistent storage **508**.

Communications unit **510**, in these examples, provides for communications with other data processing systems or devices. In these examples, communications unit **510** is a network interface card. Communications unit **510** may provide communications through the use of either or both physical and wireless communications links.

Input/output unit **512** allows for input and output of data with other devices that may be connected to data processing

system **500**. For example, input/output unit **512** may provide a connection for user input through a keyboard, a mouse, and/or some other suitable input device. Further, input/output unit **512** may send output to a printer. Display **514** provides a mechanism to display information to a user.

Instructions for the operating system, applications, and/or programs may be located in storage devices **516**, which are in communication with processor unit **504** through communications fabric **502**. In these illustrative examples, the instructions are in a functional form on persistent storage **508**. These instructions may be loaded into memory **506** for execution by processor unit **504**. The processes of the different embodiments may be performed by processor unit **504** using computer implemented instructions, which may be located in a memory, such as memory **506**.

These instructions are referred to as program code, computer usable program code, or computer readable program code that may be read and executed by a processor in processor unit **504**. The program code in the different embodiments may be embodied on different physical or computer readable storage media, such as memory **506** or persistent storage **508**.

Program code **518** is located in a functional form on computer readable media **520** that is selectively removable and may be loaded onto or transferred to data processing system **500** for execution by processor unit **504**. Program code **518** and computer readable media **520** form computer program product **522** in these examples. In one example, computer readable media **520** may be computer readable storage media **524** or computer readable signal media **526**. Computer readable storage media **524** may include, for example, an optical or magnetic disk that is inserted or placed into a drive or other device that is part of persistent storage **508** for transfer onto a storage device, such as a hard drive, that is part of persistent storage **508**. Computer readable storage media **524** also may take the form of a

persistent storage, such as a hard drive, a thumb drive, or a flash memory, that is connected to data processing system **500**. In some instances, computer readable storage media **524** may not be removable from data processing system **500**. In these illustrative examples, computer readable storage media **524** is a non-transitory computer readable storage medium.

Alternatively, program code **518** may be transferred to data processing system **500** using computer readable signal media **526**. Computer readable signal media **526** may be, for example, a propagated data signal containing program code **518**. For example, computer readable signal media **526** may be an electromagnetic signal, an optical signal, and/or any other suitable type of signal. These signals may be transmitted over communications links, such as wireless communications links, optical fiber cable, coaxial cable, a wire, and/or any other suitable type of communications link. In other words, the communications link and/or the connection may be physical or wireless in the illustrative examples.

In some advantageous embodiments, program code **518** may be downloaded over a network to persistent storage **508** from another device or data processing system through computer readable signal media **526** for use within data processing system **500**. For instance, program code stored in a computer readable storage medium in a server data processing system may be downloaded over a network from the server to data processing system **500**. The data processing system providing program code **518** may be a server computer, a client computer, or some other device capable of storing and transmitting program code **518**.

The different components illustrated for data processing system **500** are not meant to provide architectural limitations to the manner in which different embodiments may be implemented. The different advantageous embodiments may be implemented in a data processing system including components in addition to or in place of those illustrated for data processing system **500**.

Other components shown in **Figure 5** can be varied from the illustrative examples shown. The different embodiments may be implemented using any hardware device or system capable of running program code. As one example, the data processing system may include organic components integrated with inorganic components and/or may be comprised entirely of organic components excluding a human being. For example, a storage device may be comprised of an organic semiconductor.

In another illustrative example, processor unit **504** may take the form of a hardware unit that has circuits that are manufactured or configured for a particular use. This type of hardware may perform operations without needing program code to be loaded into a memory from a storage device to be configured to perform the operations.

For example, when processor unit **504** takes the form of a hardware unit, processor unit **504** may be a circuit system, an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a programmable logic device, or some other suitable type of hardware configured to perform a number of operations. With a programmable logic device, the device is configured to perform the number of operations. The device may be reconfigured at a later time or may be permanently configured to perform the number of operations. Examples of programmable logic devices include, for example, a programmable logic array, programmable array logic, a field programmable logic array, a field programmable gate array, and other suitable hardware devices. With this type of implementation, program code **518** may be omitted because the processes for the different embodiments are implemented in a hardware unit.

In still another illustrative example, processor unit **504** may be implemented using a combination of processors found in computers and hardware units. Processor unit **504** may have a number of hardware units and a number of processors that are configured to run program code **518**. With this depicted example,

some of the processes may be implemented in a number of hardware units, while other processes may be implemented in a number of processors.

As another example, a storage device in data processing system **500** is any hardware apparatus that may store data. Memory **506**, persistent storage **508**, and computer readable media **520** are examples of storage devices in a tangible form.

In another example, a bus system may be used to implement communications fabric **502** and may be comprised of one or more buses, such as a system bus or an input/output bus. Of course, the bus system may be implemented using any suitable type of architecture that provides for a transfer of data between different components or devices attached to the bus system. Additionally, a communications unit may include one or more devices used to transmit and receive data, such as a modem or a network adapter. Further, a memory may be, for example, memory **506**, or a cache, such as found in an interface and memory controller hub that may be present in communications fabric **502**.

Figure 5 is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the different advantageous embodiments.

Figure 6 is an illustration of a flowchart of a process for configuring a microgrid in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. The process illustrated in **Figure 6** may be implemented in a control center for a microgrid, such as microgrid control system **116** in **Figure 1**, microgrid control center **226** in **Figure 2**, microgrid control center **300** in **Figure 3**, and/or microgrid control center **450** in **Figure 4**. In particular, this process may be implemented using control process **318** running on microgrid controller **302** in **Figure 3**.

The process shown in **Figure 6** begins by initializing a default configuration for each element in a set of microgrid elements (operation **602**). The set of microgrid elements may include, without limitation, sensor elements associated with

distributed energy resource(s), controller elements associated with distributed energy resource(s), and network elements.

Operation **602** may include setting a default configuration for each element and verifying that the microgrid local area network is secure. In another embodiment, operation **602** may also include the power-up sequence of the entire microgrid system or the power-up sequence for a given distributed energy resource.

The process verifies an Internet protocol address for each element in the set of elements of the microgrid (operation **604**). The process may configure or assign Internet protocol addresses to one or more elements at operation **604**. In other words, the process verifies network membership of the microgrid elements.

The process pings each element in the set of elements (operation **606**). Operation **606** pings each element to verify the configuration of microgrid elements. The process determines a grid configuration (operation **608**) based on the results of pinging each element if the microgrid is already operational. If the microgrid is not yet operational with an existing configuration, operation **608** generates a microgrid configuration. In other words, the process at operation **608** creates or selects a configuration for the microgrid.

The process assigns a master processor and slave processor(s) (operation **610**). The master processor controls the microgrid systems and/or subsystems. All other distributed resource processors are slaved to the master processor. In this example, but without limitation, operation **612** identifies the processor associated with a distributed energy resource or distributed energy resource cluster that is associated with the primary load to be designated as the master processor. The processors associated with other distributed energy resources or distributed energy resource clusters are designated slave processors to the master processor.

The process makes a determination as to whether the microgrid is a utility tied microgrid (operation **612**). If the utility is not a utility tied microgrid, the process executes operation **616.** If the microgrid is connected to a utility, the process synchronizes the microgrid with the utility (operation **614**). In other words, the microgrid power output is slaved to the utility.

The process determines an average alternating current (AC) bus loading (operation **616**). Operation **616** may also determine transmission line impedances.

The process identifies local loads for each distributed energy resource connected to the microgrid (operation **618**). The process at operation **618** may also determine the criticality of local loads for each distributed energy resource.

The process receives status data from the set of elements connected in a peer-to-peer network within a microgrid local area network (operation **620**). The status data may be received as a result of performing a state of health test for one or more elements in the set of microgrid elements. In one embodiment, a state of health test is performed on every element in the set of microgrid elements.

The process makes a determination as to whether a re-alignment of microgrid elements is indicated based on the status data (operation **622**). If the status data indicates a reconfiguration, the process re-aligns the set of elements to form a second grid configuration (operation **624**). Re-aligning the set of elements may include changing a set of tasks to be performed by a given element, re-designating a function of a given element, or activating a redundant element to replace a failed element.

The process executes the grid configuration (operation **626**). The process continues to monitor the microgrid system (operation **628**) in real-time. The process then returns to

operation **620** if the monitored status data indicates a grid re-configuration.

The status data may indicate a grid re-configuration if the status indicates a failure in an element in the microgrid, a decrease in power output by a distributed energy resource, an increase in power demand, or any other status change.

With reference now to **Figure 7**, an illustration of a flowchart of a process for configuring a microgrid is depicted in accordance with an advantageous embodiment. The process illustrated in **Figure 7** may be implemented in a control center for a microgrid, such as microgrid control system **116** in **Figure 1**, microgrid control center **226** in **Figure 2**, microgrid control center **300** in **Figure 3**, and/or microgrid control center **450** in **Figure 4**. In particular, this process may be implemented using control process **318** running on microgrid controller **302** in **Figure 3**. The process in **Figure 7** may also be implemented by a master processor in a microgrid, such as processor **402** in **Figure 4**.

The process begins by receiving status data from a set of microgrid controller elements connected in a peer-to-peer network on a microgrid (operation **702**). The process makes a determination as to whether a status change exceeds a threshold level (operation **704**).

If the change in status does not exceed a threshold level, the process returns to operation **702** and continues monitoring the status of the microgrid. If the change does exceed the threshold level of change, the process re-aligns the set of microgrid controller elements to form a re-aligned microgrid configuration (operation **706**). The process executes the re-aligned microgrid configuration (operation **708**). The process returns to operation **702** to continue monitoring the status of the microgrid.

The flowcharts and block diagrams in the different depicted embodiments illustrate the architecture, functionality, and

operation of some possible implementations of apparatus and methods in different advantageous embodiments. In this regard, each block in the flowchart or block diagrams may represent a module, segment, function, and/or a portion of an operation or step. For example, one or more of the blocks may be implemented as program code, in hardware, or a combination of the program code and hardware. When implemented in hardware, the hardware may, for example, take the form of integrated circuits that are manufactured or configured to perform one or more operations in the flowcharts or block diagrams.

In some alternative implementations, the function or functions noted in the block may occur out of the order noted in the figures. For example, in some cases, two blocks shown in succession may be executed substantially concurrently, or the blocks may sometimes be executed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality involved. Also, other blocks may be added in addition to the illustrated blocks in a flowchart or block diagram.

In one advantageous embodiment, a method is provided for configuring a microgrid. A first configuration of a microgrid having a set of microgrid elements is initialized. An Internet protocol address for each element in the set of elements of the microgrid is verified. An average load and a common load associated with the set of elements is identified. Status data from the set of elements connected in a peer-to-peer network within a microgrid local area network is received. In response to the status data indicating a reconfiguration of the microgrid, the set of elements is re-aligned to form a second grid configuration. The second grid configuration is executed.

Thus, the advantageous embodiments provide an adaptable microgrid control system that provides microgrid elements with portability, re-configurability, and standardization for all microgrid systems and components firmware. The microgrid control system of the advantageous embodiments provides a

control system that increases the reliability, utilization, and efficiency of renewable energy sources, distributed energy generation, distributed energy storage, and power quality with predictable, uninterrupted power supply to end users.

The advantageous embodiments also provide a microgrid control system with network health monitoring capabilities and adaptability to compensate for element failures, decreases in energy production from a distributed energy resource, and increases in energy demand from end users.

The different advantageous embodiments also provide a microgrid control architecture and communications network that increases the use of renewable energy sources, distributed energy generation, power storage, and power quality. The microgrid control system of the advantageous embodiments also provides uninterruptible power supply and network health management capabilities. The embodiments also provide a microgrid control system with portability, re-configurability, and standardization for all of the microgrid systems, elements, and components firmware.

The microgrid control system of the embodiments may also be utilized to enable distributed intelligence that reduces the complexity of power system operation by assigning control functions locally at lower levels rather than at a centralized control center. Moreover, the microgrid control system of the embodiments may provide distributed power generation that is redundant, resilient, and has a secure infrastructure.

The different advantageous embodiments can take the form of an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment, or an embodiment containing both hardware and software elements. Some embodiments are implemented in software, which includes but is not limited to forms, such as, for example, firmware, resident software, and microcode.

Furthermore, the different embodiments can take the form of a computer program product accessible from a computer usable or

computer readable medium providing program code for use by, or in connection with, a computer, or any device or system that executes instructions. For the purposes of this disclosure, a computer usable or computer readable medium can generally be any tangible apparatus that can contain, store, communicate, propagate, or transport the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

The computer usable or computer readable medium can be, for example, without limitation, an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system, or a propagation medium. Non limiting examples of a computer readable medium include a semiconductor or solid state memory, magnetic tape, a removable computer diskette, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), a rigid magnetic disk, and an optical disk. Optical disks may include compact disk – read only memory (CD-ROM), compact disk – read/write (CD-R/W), and DVD.

Further, a computer usable or computer readable medium may contain or store a computer readable or usable program code, such that when the computer readable or usable program code is executed on a computer, the execution of this computer readable or usable program code causes the computer to transmit another computer readable or usable program code over a communications link. This communications link may use a medium that is, for example without limitation, physical or wireless.

A data processing system suitable for storing and/or executing computer readable or computer usable program code will include one or more processors coupled directly or indirectly to memory elements through a communications fabric, such as a system bus. The memory elements may include local memory employed during actual execution of the program code, bulk storage, and cache memories which provide temporary storage of at least some computer readable or computer usable program code

to reduce the number of times code may be retrieved from bulk storage during execution of the code.

Input/output, or I/O devices, can be coupled to the system either directly or through intervening I/O controllers. These devices may include, for example, without limitation, keyboards, touch screen displays, and pointing devices. Different communications adapters may also be coupled to the system to enable the data processing system to become coupled to other data processing systems or remote printers or storage devices through intervening private or public networks. Modems and network adapters are just a few of the non-limiting examples currently available types of communications adapters.

The description of the different advantageous embodiments has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the embodiments in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Further, different advantageous embodiments may provide different advantages as compared to other advantageous embodiments. The embodiment or embodiments selected are chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the embodiments, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the disclosure for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

More embodiments may include an apparatus , wherein the microgrid controller is further configured to perform a live test of the first configuration, wherein the live test comprises pinging the each element in the set of microgrid elements.

More embodiments may include an apparatus , wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and further comprising:

a set of controller elements, wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a controller network connecting each element in the set of controller elements to form a peer-to-peer controller network within the microgrid local area network

More embodiments may include an apparatus further comprising:

a first controller element in the set of controller elements, wherein the first controller element is configured to send controller status data generated by the first controller element to a second controller element in the set of microgrid controller elements using the controller network.

More embodiments may include an apparatus , wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and further comprising:

a set of processors, wherein the peer-to-peer network comprises a processor network connecting each distributed energy resource processor in the set of processors to form a peer-to-peer processor network within the microgrid local area network.

More embodiments may include an apparatus further comprising:

a first processor in the set of processors configured to send processor status data generated by the first processor to a second processor in the set of processors using the processor network.

More embodiments may include an apparatus further comprising:

a single common redundant network port for Internet access to a microgrid local area network, wherein a remote client can access the microgrid local area network through the single common redundant network port, , wherein a set of cyber-security methods and tools are implemented on the single, common

redundant network port; and wherein the single common redundant network port is configured to permit remote clients access to status data and deny remote clients access to control functions associated with the microgrid.

More embodiments may include a computer program product, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a controller network and further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for connecting each controller element in the set of microgrid elements in the peer-to-peer controller network within the local area network; and

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending the status data generated by a first controller element on the microgrid to a second controller element in the set of microgrid elements using the controller network.

More embodiments may include a computer program product, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network, wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a processor network connecting each distributed energy resource processor in a set of cluster processors in the peer-to-peer network within the microgrid local area network, and further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending status data generated by a first cluster processor on the microgrid to a second cluster processor in the set of cluster processors using the processor network.

More embodiments may include a computer program product further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for permitting remote clients using an Internet

connection to access the microgrid local area network only through a single, common redundant network port, wherein a set of cyber-security methods and tools are implemented on the single, common redundant network port;

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for permitting the remote clients to access the status data and load data associated with the microgrid; and

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for denying the remote clients access to control functions associated with the microgrid.

More embodiments may include a computer program product further comprising:

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending the status data generated by a controller element within the set of microgrid elements to a set of distributed energy resource processors on the microgrid using the peer-to-peer local area network; and program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for sending the status data generated by a distributed energy cluster processor to every processor in the set of distributed energy resource.

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for configuring a microgrid, the method comprising:

initializing a first configuration of the microgrid having a set of microgrid elements;

verifying an address for each element in the set of microgrid elements;

responsive to receiving status data from the set of microgrid elements connected in a peer-to-peer network that indicates a reconfiguration of the microgrid, re-aligning the set of microgrid elements to form a second grid configuration; and

executing the second grid configuration.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of microgrid elements comprises at least one of a sensor associated with a distributed energy resource, a controller associated with the distributed energy resource, a processor, a router, and a managed Ethernet switch.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

responsive to the status data indicating a master processor has failed, re-designating a functional slave processor as a re-configured master processor.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

performing a live test of the first configuration, wherein the live test comprises pinging the each element in the set of microgrid elements.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

sending the status data generated by a controller element within the set of microgrid elements to a set of distributed energy resource processors on the microgrid using the peer-to-peer network; and

sending the status data generated by a distributed energy cluster processor to every processor in the set of distributed energy resource.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a peer-to-peer controller network connecting to each controller element in the set of microgrid elements, and further comprising:

sending the status data generated by a first controller element on the microgrid to a second controller element in the set of microgrid elements using the controller network.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a microgrid local area network and wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises a processor network connecting each distributed energy resource processor in a set of cluster processors in the peer-to-peer network within the microgrid local area network, and further comprising:

sending status data generated by a first cluster processor on the microgrid to a second cluster processor in the set of cluster processors using the processor network, wherein the status data comprises at least one of a state of health of an element in the set of microgrid elements and a measurement of a load associated with a distributed energy resource.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

permitting remote clients using an Internet connection to access a microgrid local area network only through a single, common redundant network port, wherein a set of cyber-security

methods and tools are implemented on the single, common redundant network port;

permitting the remote clients to access the status data and load data associated with the microgrid; and

denying the remote clients access to control functions associated with the microgrid.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

identifying an average load and a common load associated with the set of microgrid elements.

10. A method for managing a microgrid, the method comprising:

receiving status data from a set of microgrid controller elements connected in a peer-to-peer controller network connecting the set of microgrid controller elements within a microgrid local area network of a microgrid;

responsive to the status data indicating a change in the microgrid that exceeds a threshold level, re-aligning the set of microgrid controller elements and a set of tasks associated with the set of microgrid controller elements to form a re-aligned microgrid configuration;

executing the re-aligned microgrid configuration.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

receiving status data from a set of distributed energy resource cluster processors connected in a peer-to-peer processor network within the microgrid local area network.

12. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

sending the status data generated by a first controller element on the microgrid to a second controller element in the set of microgrid controller elements; and

sending the status data generated by the controller element on the microgrid to every processor in a set of distributed

energy resource cluster processors on the microgrid using a peer-to-peer processor network.

13. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

sending processor status data generated by a first distributed energy cluster processor on the microgrid to each controller element in the set of microgrid controller elements; and

sending the processor status data generated by the distributed energy cluster processor to a second processor in a set of distributed energy resource cluster processors on the microgrid using a peer-to-peer processor network.

14. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

responsive to the status data indicating a failure in a first controller element in the set of controller elements, assigning a function of the first controller element to a second controller element in the set of controller elements.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein a given managed Ethernet switch is connected to a single controller element in the set of controller elements.

16. An apparatus comprising:

a microgrid having a set of microgrid elements;

a microgrid controller associated with the microgrid configured to initialize a first configuration of the microgrid; verify an address for each element in the set of microgrid elements; re-align the set of microgrid elements to form a second grid configuration in response to receiving status data from the set of microgrid elements connected in a peer-to-peer

network that indicates a reconfiguration of the microgrid,; and execute the second grid configuration.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising:

a set of two routers connected to a processor in a distributed energy resource cluster within the microgrid.

18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the set of elements comprises at least one of a sensor associated with the distributed energy resource, a controller associated with a distributed energy resource, a processor, a router, and a managed Ethernet switch.

19. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the peer-to-peer network is a network within a local area network and wherein the peer-to-peer network further comprises:

a peer-to-peer redundant ring controller network sending the status data generated by a controller element within the set of microgrid elements to a set of distributed energy resource processors on the microgrid using the peer-to-peer local area network; and

a peer-to-peer processor network sending the status data generated by a distributed energy cluster processor to every processor in the set of distributed energy resource.

20. A computer program product for configuring a microgrid, the computer program product comprising:

a computer recordable storage medium;

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for initializing a first configuration of the microgrid having a set of microgrid elements;

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for verifying an address for each element in the set of microgrid elements;

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for re-aligning the set of microgrid elements to form a second grid configuration in response to receiving status data from the set of microgrid elements connected in a peer-to-peer network that indicates a reconfiguration of the microgrid; and

program code, stored on the computer recordable storage medium, for executing the second grid configuration.