

A Stable Black-Start Strategy for a Stand-Alone DC Micro-Grid

Jae-Hun Cha*, Yoon-Tak Han**, Kyung-Won Park***, Jin-Hong Oh*, Tae-Seong Choi*,
Jae-Hun Ko*, Philemon MAHIRANE*, Jae-Yun An[§] and Jae-Eon Kim[†]

Abstract – Unlike an AC system, a DC system does not cause problems with synchronization, stability, reactive power, system losses, and cost. However, more research is still required for the application of DC Systems. This paper proposes a stable black-start strategy for a stand-alone DC micro-grid, which consists of an energy storage system, photovoltaic generator, wind-turbine generator, diesel generator, and DC loads. The proposed method is very important for avoiding inrush current and transient overvoltage in the power system equipment during restoration after a blackout. PSCAD/EMTDC software was used to simulate, analyze, and verify the method, which was found to be stable and applicable for a stand-alone DC micro-grid.

Keywords: LVDC, DC Distribution, DC micro-grid, Blackout, Black-start, Restoration, PSCAD/EMTDC

1. Introduction

In some areas, it is difficult to connect to the main power grid in due to geographical or economic factors, such as on islands. One method to supply power to such areas is a stand-alone micro-grid, which is a small-scale power system that is not connected to a utility grid and can supply power locally from distributed generators (DGs).

In the past, stand-alone micro-grids were supplied power by diesel generators, but recently, they have been powered by hybrid power generation systems that combine diesel generators and renewable energy sources (RES), which have been attracting interest from researchers [1-3]. However, such a setup makes it impossible to supply power to a load stably because the output power is not constant due to environmental factors such as weather. Therefore, energy storage systems (ESSs) are an essential element [4-7].

Micro-grids can be divided into AC and DC micro-grids. Unlike AC micro-grids, a DC micro-grid does not cause problems with synchronization, stability, and reactive power. It also does not require a converter for secondary power conversion, which is advantageous in terms of system efficiency and cost. In addition, the number of applications using DC power sources is increasing, and much research on DC systems is being conducted [8-10].

Power systems can have a variety of problems, such as faults, lightning strikes, and equipment failures. When a blackout occurs, it is very important to restore the power

system quickly and reliably because blackout has significant impacts on every life. The restoration method depends on the fault type, voltage level, and generators [11-13]. Complete system restoration after a blackout requires appropriate restoration plans, training exercises, verification, and expert knowledge and experience [14].

There are several issues in the black-start of AC systems, such as transmission line charging. In this process, the charging current at the time of re-energizing requires sufficient reactive capability from the black-start generation due to the high capacitance of the transmission lines [15-17]. However, for DC systems, the frequency of the voltage and the current is zero, so these problems do not occur. This is additional advantage of DC systems.

This paper proposes a black-start strategy for a stand-alone DC micro-grid, which depends on the state of charge (SOC) of ESS. We had analyzed using PSCAD/EMTDC software. The rest of the paper is as follows. Section II describes the micro-grid configuration, and Section III explains the system controller. Section IV presents the proposed strategy, and the results of a simulation and analysis are described in section V.

2. Configuration of a Stand-Alone DC Micro-grid

Fig. 1 shows the configuration of a stand-alone DC micro-grid combined with an RES and ESS, which consist of a wind power (WP) generator, photovoltaic (PV) generator, diesel generator, and DC loads. To maintain the voltage of the micro-grid, the voltage of the DC bus must be maintained using the ESS, so it must operate at all times [18]. The RES is configured with an MPPT control scheme.

The WP generator consists of a permanent magnet

[†] Corresponding Author: School of Electric Engineering, Chungbuk National University, Korea. (jekim@cbnu.ac.kr)

* Sch. of Electric Engineering, Chungbuk National University, Korea. ({peslab, smpark0728, chlxtotjd, ko0283}@naver.com, philem2009@yahoo.fr)

** Korea Testing Certification, Korea. (ythan@ktc.re.kr)

*** LS Industrial System Corporation, Korea. (kwpark@lisis.com)

§ TripleCores Technology, Korea. (vision@hanmail.net)

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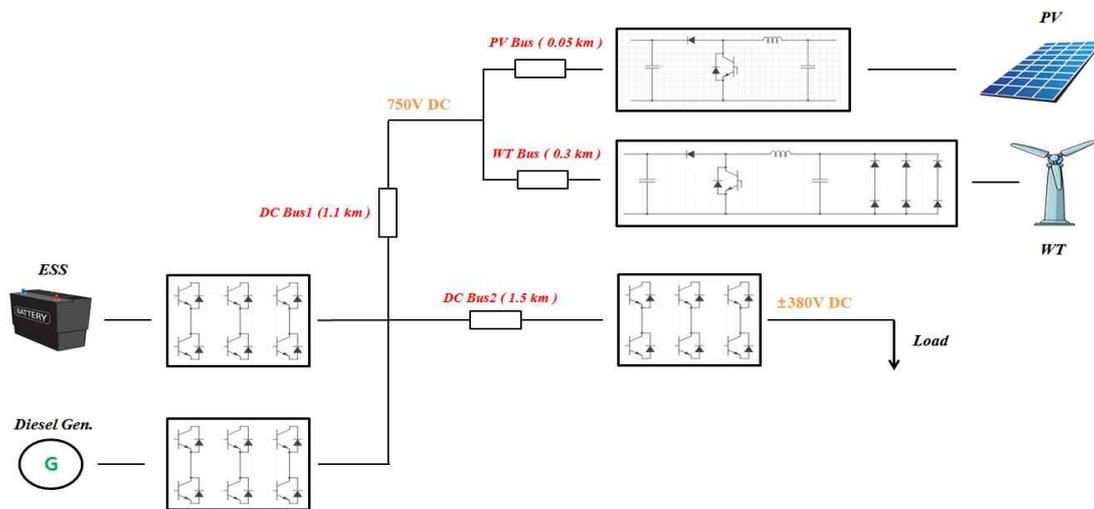


Fig. 1. Concept of stand-alone DC micro-grid

synchronous generator (PMSG) that is capable of variable speed control for different wind speeds. The PV generator has a DC/DC boost converter that controls the MPPT current. The diesel generator is configured to operate only when the demand is more than the supply of the DG, or when the battery needs charging but other RESs don't provide enough power because of weather condition. The ESS has a bidirectional three-phase interleaved DC/DC converter, and a constant DC bus voltage should be maintained in both charging and discharging operation modes.

3. System Controller

3.1 Diesel generator controller

In general, synchronous generator has power control mode when supply power to DC system. But in this system the diesel generator has two modes: active power control mode and voltage control mode, which is connected to the DC bus. The controller structure is shown in Fig. 2. Because the ESS maintains the voltage of the DC bus, the diesel generator normally operates in only the active power mode when the power supply to the load or the state of charge of the battery becomes insufficient. However, if a fault in the ESS prevents the DC bus voltage from being

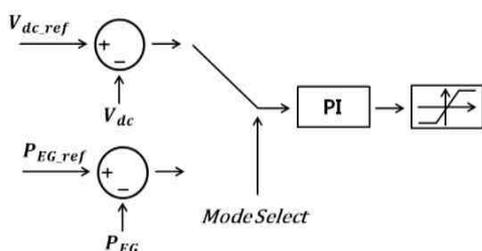


Fig. 2. Voltage and active power controller for diesel

maintained, the converter must operate in voltage control mode to supply power to the load.

3.2 PV controller

DC/DC converters are generally applied to PV systems to supply appropriate DC voltage amplitude to a system input terminal. When the number of modules is small, the input voltage is low and it is difficult to attain the reference voltage. Therefore, a high DC voltage is required to maintain a stable reference voltage. In this model, the controller is designed as in Fig. 3, which shows the switching of the DC/DC converter to transfer maximum power through current control instead of simple voltage boosting control.

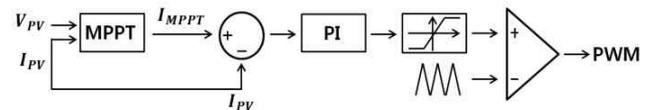


Fig. 3. Current controller for a PV system

3.3 WT controller

The WT Generator is connected to the DC Bus via a three-phase rectifier and DC/DC boost converter. The mechanical energy produced by the blades can be modeled as a current controller, as shown in Fig. 4.

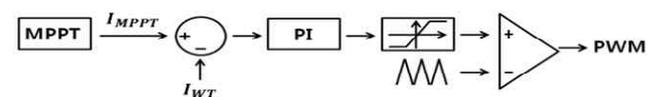


Fig. 4. Current controller for WT generator

3.4 ESS controller

The voltage of the DC bus must be controlled by the

ESS, and when the generated power is smaller than the load power, it operates in discharge mode and transfers the power stored in the battery to the load. When the generated power is greater than the load power, the system operates in a charging mode to store surplus power in the battery such that the power is transmitted in both directions. Fig. 5 presents the control structure of the ESS.

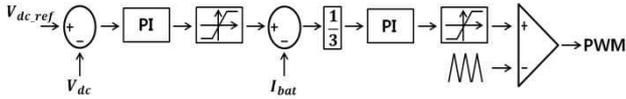


Fig. 5. Controller for the ESS

4. Black-Start Strategy for a Stand-Alone DC Micro-Grid

In the proposed black-start strategy, except when SOC is greater than maximum SOC rate, the diesel generator should operate in voltage control mode to set the initial DC bus voltage. Next, the ESS is connected to perform voltage control of the DC Bus, and the diesel generator changes to active power control or stop according SOC of ESS. The PV, WT, and load are then connected in that order. If SOC is greater than maximum SOC rate, only ESS operates. The flowchart of such a blackstart strategy is presented in Fig. 6. The procedure of the blackstart strategy as the following:

- Step 1. Check if the DC bus voltage is zero
- Step 2. If the SOC is greater than SOC_{max} rate go to Step 3, If not go to Step 4
- Step 3. Connect the ESS, which performs voltage control of the DC bus and manages the power
- Step 4. Diesel generator starts operating and performing constant voltage control mode

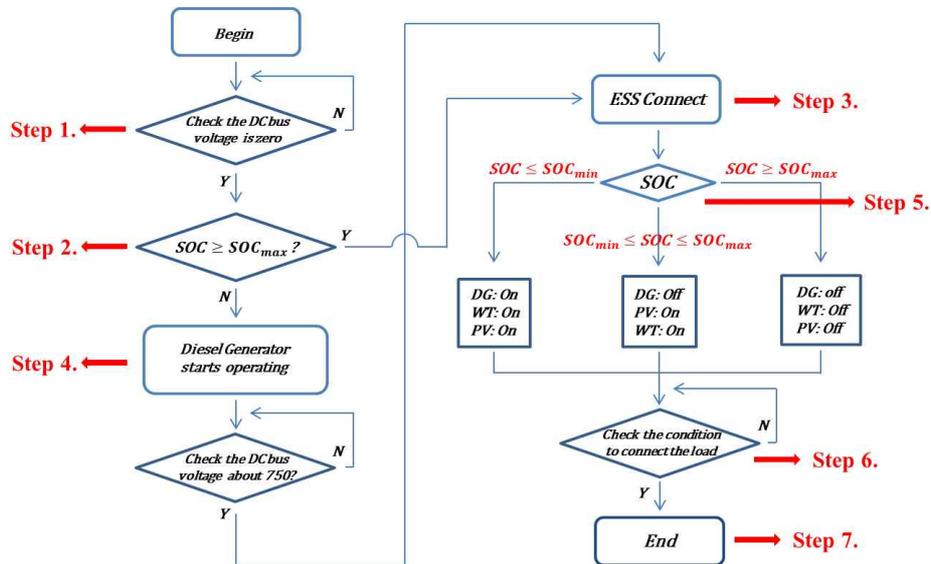


Fig. 6. Flowchart of the Black-Start Strategy

- Step 5. Check the SOC of the ESS to determine whether the PV and WT can be connected, and determine the operation mode of the diesel generator
- Step 6. Check for the following condition to connect the load:

$$P_{Load} \leq P_{PV} + P_{WT} + P_{EG} + P_{ESS}$$

where P_{Load} is the load that satisfies blackstart, P_{PV} is PV output, P_{WT} WT output, P_{EG} is diesel generator output, and P_{ESS} is ESS output. Only the load that satisfies the above condition can be connected.

- Step 7. End

5. Simulation Results and Analysis

To verify the proposed strategy, a simulation was carried out for three cases using PSCAD/EMTDC software. Table 1 shows the configurations, and Table 2

Table 1. Specifications of stand-alone DC micro-grid for verification

Index	Parameters	Value	Remarks
Battery DC/DC converter	Input cap.	6 [uF]	
	Output cap.	10000 [uF]	
	Reactor	0.01 [mH]	
Diesel AC/DC converter	DC-link cap.	10000 [uF]	250 [kW]
	AC reactor	1 [mH]	
	AC filter cap.	50 [uF]	
	Tr.	290/380 Y/D	
RES DC/DC converter	Input cap.	1220 [uF]	PV = 200[kW] WT = 100 [kW]
	Output cap.	1220 [uF]	
	Reactor	0.104 [mH]	

Table 2. Parameters of each line cable

Index	Length	Parameter
Bus 1	1.1 [km]	R = 0.169 [Ω /km], L = 0.7452 [mH/km]
Bus 2	1.5 [km]	
PV	0.05 [km]	
WT	0.3 [km]	

shows the parameters of each line cable.

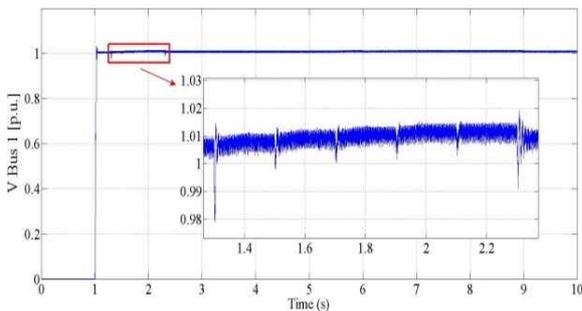
5.1 Case 1: $SOC \leq SOC_{min}$

Fig. 7 shows the simulation results for Case 1, in which the SOC of the ESS is lower than the minimum SOC rate. The operating scenario in the simulation is scheduled in terms of the intervals of cases and times listed in Table 3. Figs. 7(a) and (b) show the p.u. values of the DC bus voltage and load side voltage, which are maintained within $\pm 2\%$.

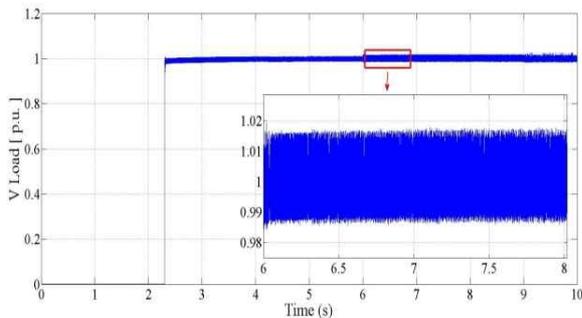
Table 3. Operation scenario of Case 1

Time (s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
DG		[Red bar]										
ESS		[Magenta bar]										
PV			[Blue bar]									
WT			[Green bar]									
Load			[Brown bar]									
Load Power [kW]			60	60	60	60	80	80	80	100	100	

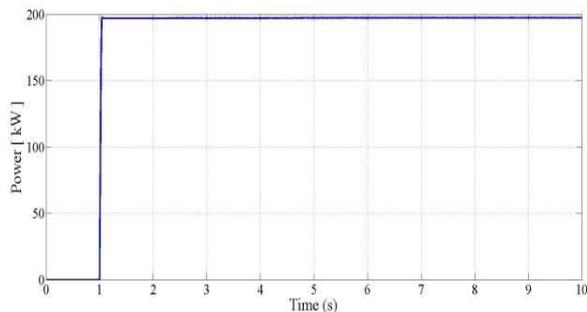
At this case all systems are operating. First, the diesel generator operates to set the DC bus voltage, Next the ESS is connected. Then the PV generators are connected in order and the wind generators are connected. When all generators are connected to the DC bus, the DC loads are connected.



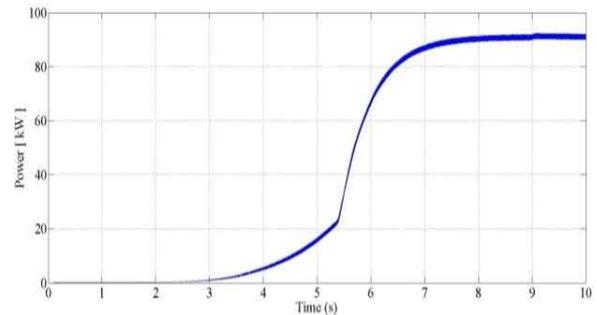
(a) DC bus voltage (p.u.)



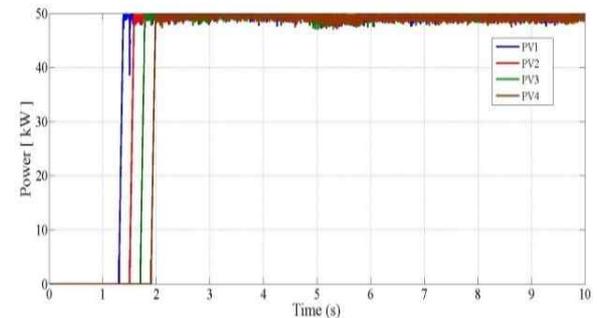
(b) Load side voltage (p.u.)



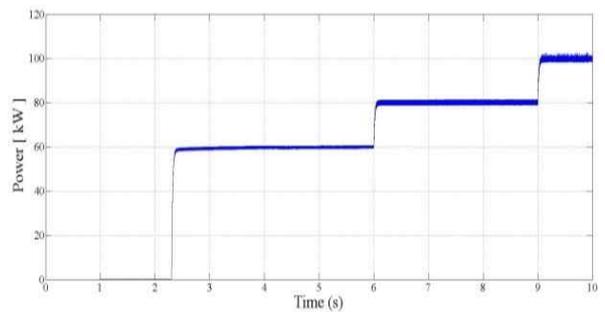
(c) Output Power of diesel generator



(d) Output power of wind turbine



(e) Output power of photovoltaics



(f) Power of DC loads

Fig. 7. Simulation results for Case 1: (a) DC bus voltage (p.u.); (b) load side voltage (p.u.); (c) output power of diesel generator; (d) output power of wind turbine; (e) output power of photovoltaic; (f) power of DC loads

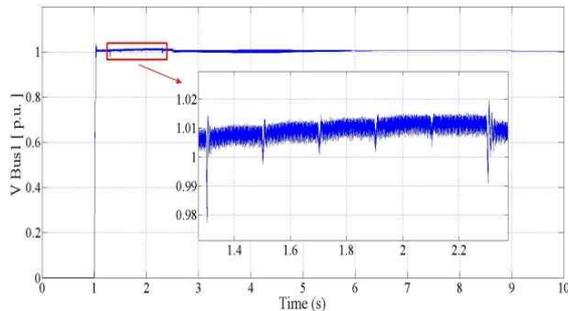
5.2 Case 2: $SOC_{min} \leq SOC \leq SOC_{max}$

Case 2, the SOC is in the steady state range. The simulation results are illustrated in Fig. 8, and Table 4 shows the operating scenario.

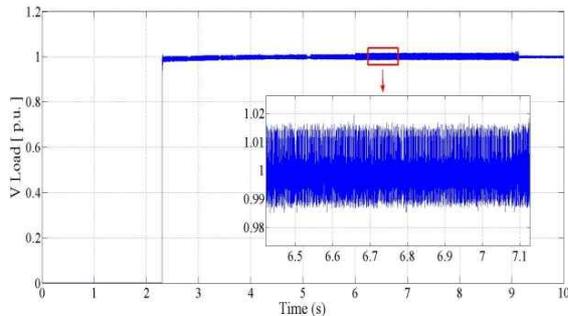
In Case 2, the diesel generator operates for stability of

Table 4. Operation scenario of Case 2

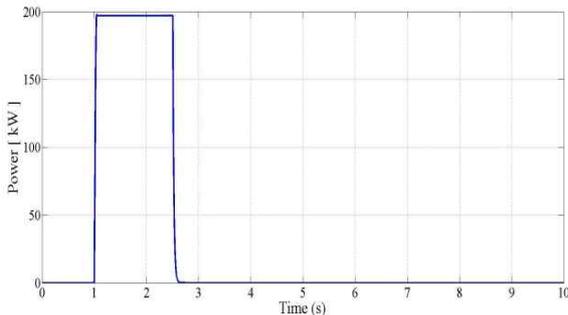
Time (s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DG		█									
ESS		█									
PV		█									
WT			█								
Load			█								
Load Power [kW]			60	60	60	60	80	80	80	100	100



(a) DC bus voltage (p.u.)



(b) Load side voltage (p.u.)



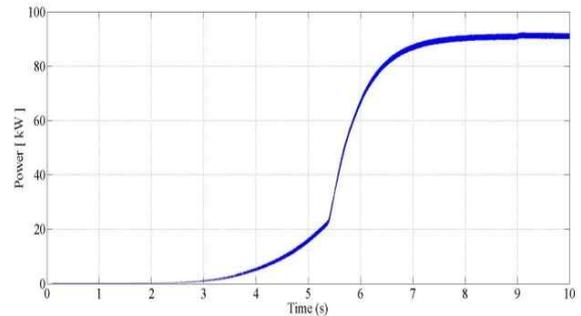
(c) Output power of diesel generator

the initial start although the SOC is in a steady state. When the ESS is connected and the DC bus voltage is maintained, the diesel generator stops operating, and the connection method of the remaining generators is the same as Case 1. Like Case 1, the black-start result of Case 2 also indicates that the DC bus voltage and load side voltage are well maintained within $\pm 2\%$.

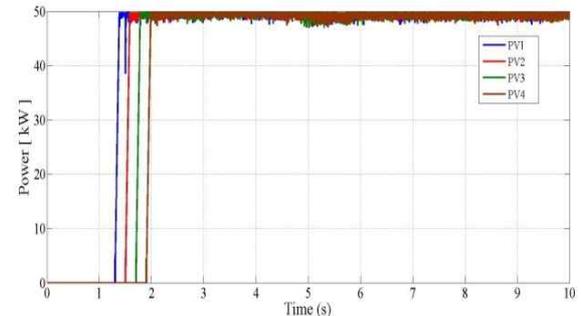
5.3 Case 3: $SOC \geq SOC_{max}$

In Case 3, the SOC of the ESS is higher than the SOC maximum rate, and the results are shown in Fig. 9. Table 5 shows the operating scenario.

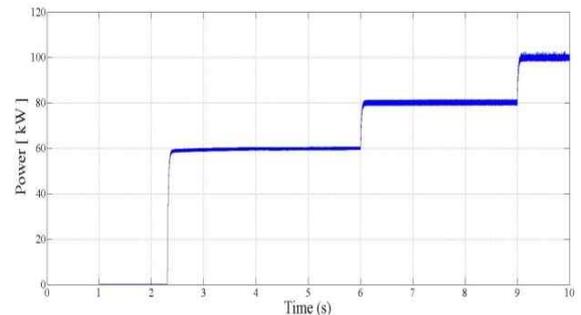
In Case 3, unlike Case 1 and Case 2, all generators do not operate. Only ESS is connected to DC bus to maintain voltage and supply power to the load. The DC bus voltage and load side voltage are maintained within $\pm 3\%$.



(d) Output power of wind turbine



(e) Output power of photovoltaics



(f) Power of DC loads

Fig. 8. Simulation results of Case 2: (a) DC bus voltage (p.u.); (b) load side voltage (p.u.); (c) output power of diesel generator; (d) output power of wind turbine; (e) output power of photovoltaic; (f) power of DC loads

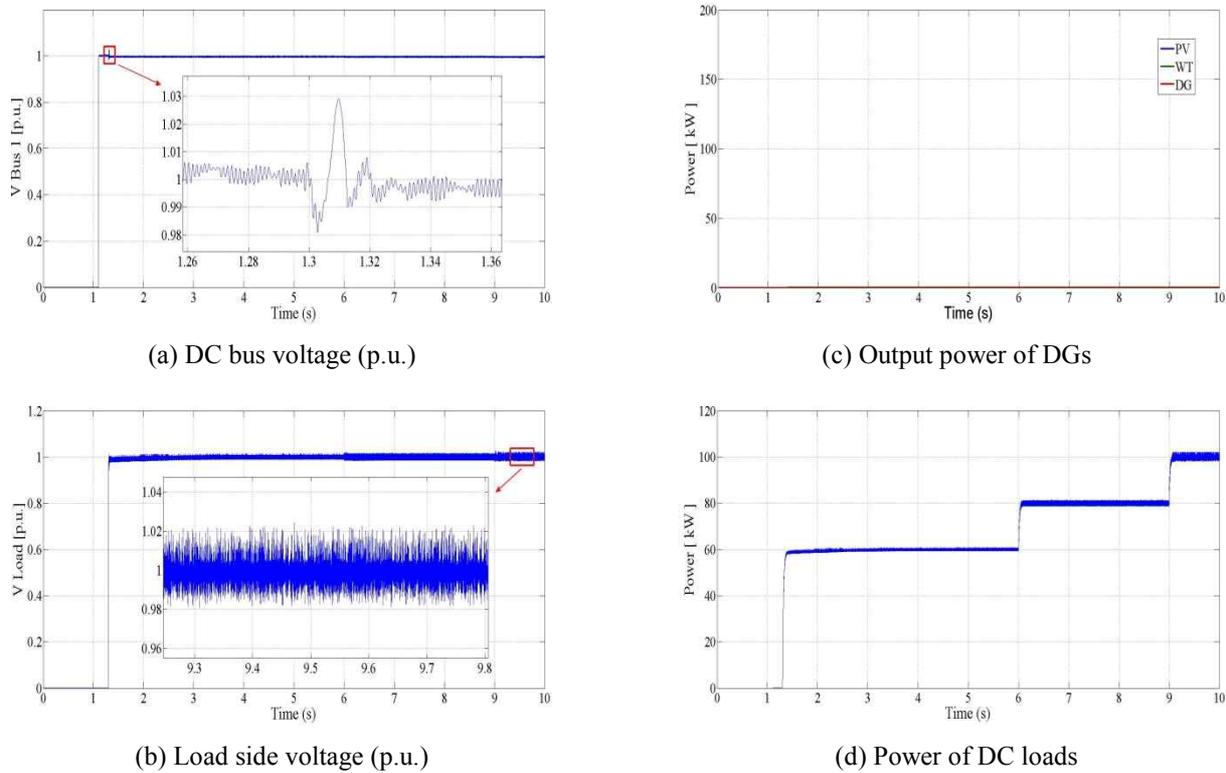


Fig. 9. Simulation results of the Case 3: (a) DC bus voltage (p.u.); (b) load side voltage (p.u.); (c) output power of DGs; (d) power of DC Loads

Table 5. Operation scenario of Case 3

Time (s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DG											
ESS		—									
PV											
WT											
Load		—									
Load Power [kW]		60	60	60	60	60	80	80	80	100	100

6. Conclusion

In the event of blackouts, it is very important to restore the power system both quickly and stably. The simulation results of the proposed method met the relevant requirements in all the three cases. In the future, this method could be used to restore systems in a stable manner when blackouts occur or initial start in a stand-alone DC micro-grid.

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distribution systems with distributed generation.

Jae-Hun Cha He received the B.S. degree in Electric Engineering from Chungbuk National University, Korea, in 2016. He is currently working toward his M.S. in Electrical Engineering at Chungbuk National University. His research interests include operation and design of AC and DC power



power distribution systems with distributed generation.

Yoon-tak Han He received B.S degree in Electrical Engineering from Kyung won University and M.S degree in Electrical Engineering from Soongsil University, Korea, in 2002 and 2005, respectively. His current research interests include test of electric apparatus and operation & design of



University. His interests are AC/DC power system protections.

Kyung-Won Park He received the B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Hanyang in 1996 and 1999, respectively. He has worked for LSIS Electrotechnology R&D Center since 2001 developing protective IED and he is a PhD student in Electrical Engineering at Chungbuk National



systems with distributed generation.

Jin-Hong Oh He received the B.S. degree in Electric Engineering from Chungbuk National University, Korea, in 2016. He is currently working toward his M.S. in Electric Engineering at Chungbuk National University. His research interests include operation and design of power distribution



interests include design of power distribution systems, control of converters.

Tae-Seong Choi He was born in Iksan, Korea, on June 12, 1991. He received the B.S degree in Electric Engineering from Chungbuk National University, Korea, in 2017 respectively. He is currently working toward his M.S. in Electric Engineering at Chungbuk National University. His research



Jae-Hun Ko He received the B.S. in Electric Engineering from Chungbuk National University, Korea, in 2017 respectively. He is currently working toward his M.S. in Electrical Engineering at Chungbuk National University. His research interests include operation and design of LVDC distribution

systems.



Philemon MAHIRANE He received the B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering from University of Rwanda, College of Science and Technology (UR-CST), Nyarugenge Campus, in August 2015. He is currently working toward his M.S. in Electrical Engineering at Chungbuk National University, South Korea. His

research interest includes analysis of power quality in distributed systems and smart grid.



Jae-Yun An He received the B.S and M.S degrees in Department of Electrical Engineering from Chungbuk National University, Korea, in 2004 and 2008, respectively. His Current research interests include operation and design of power distribution systems with distributed generation, monitoring

s/w and DC Arc & microwave plasma application.



Jae-Eon Kim He received the B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Hanyang in 1982 and 1984, respectively. He was affiliated with KERI as a researcher from 1984 to 1989; a senior researcher form 1989 to 1996; and a team leader of advanced distribution systems and custom power lab from

1997 to 1998. He received his Ph.D. from Kyoto University, Japan in 1996. He has been a professor at Chungbuk National University since 1998. His current interests are analysis of power quality; operation and design of AC & DC power distribution systems with distributed generation and advanced distribution systems, such as micro-grid or smart grid.