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Subject: Are the area clusters for one country the same across years?  
Posted by [andrew49@stanford.edu](mailto:andrew49@stanford.edu) on Fri, 01 Mar 2024 01:57:59 GMT  
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I understand that area clusters aren't identified for privacy reasons, but I wanted to double check that they are still uniform across years in DHS surveys (looking at Malawi specifically.)

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Subject: Re: Are the area clusters for one country the same across years?  
Posted by [Janet-DHS](#) on Wed, 06 Mar 2024 21:17:12 GMT  
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Following is a response from DHS staff member, Tom Pullum:

The methodology for sampling clusters from the sampling frame is consistent across surveys, but successive surveys in the same country have different samples of clusters, households, and respondents. There is no continuity in the actual sample.

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Subject: Re: Are the area clusters for one country the same across years?  
Posted by [VincentMcCarthy](#) on Thu, 09 Oct 2025 08:04:31 GMT  
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You're right that DHS area clusters aren't identified for confidentiality reasons. However, they are generally consistent within each survey year--meaning the same cluster ID refers to the same geographic area across variables within that dataset. That said, cluster IDs are not meant to be comparable across different survey years (e.g., 2010 vs. 2016 Malawi DHS), since the geometry dash sampling design is independent for each round.

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