The 12th Meeting of the Upper Mekong Working Group on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Zoning and Animal Movement Management (UMWG) was organised from 4 to 6 February 2015 in Vinh Phuc, Vietnam, by the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia (OIE SRR–SEA), in cooperation with the Vietnamese Department of Animal Health. Twenty-four representatives (17 men and 7 women) from the Veterinary Services of the People’s Republic of China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam were in attendance, as well as partners from the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO–RAP), and the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (OIE RR–AP). The meeting was also attended by observers from the Department of Animal Health of Vietnam, OIE Special Advisor Dr Gardner Murray, and Dr Stéphane Forman of the World Bank Group.

The 12th UMWG meeting provided a forum for Member Countries and partners to share experiences and information on the current status of FMD in the region, and to provide updates on past and continuing initiatives for prevention and control. In particular, participants provided updates on FMD control activities in the Upper Mekong Zone, with inputs from the OIE RR–AP and the FAO–RAP on activities in the region. Technical presentations reviewed the importance of animal movement management and monitoring vaccination programmes, and highlighted the ways in which participatory epidemiology (PE) could be used to support these endeavours. Plenary discussions focused on the progress made on recommendations from previous meetings, and refined future recommendations for priority action for the South-East Asia and China Foot-and-Mouth Disease Campaign (SEACFMD) and Member Countries over the coming year.

Facilitated workshops were conducted on the first and second days, starting with discussions of potential applications of PE to improve FMD control in the region. Members outlined current practices for animal movement management and vaccination and post-vaccination monitoring, and recorded country-specific benchmarks. These workshops in turn provided an opportunity for participants to suggest and develop regionally relevant strategies to improve FMD investigations, movement management and vaccination monitoring in the Upper Mekong Zone.

A field trip on day three gave participants the chance to view the facilities and management procedures for cross-border animal movement at the Huu Nghi International Border Gate in Lang Son, Vietnam.

Over all, the 12th UMWG meeting enabled participants to share information, interact, network, plan together and discuss options and complementarities for FMD plans and activities. Key recommendations included an agreement to develop cross-border animal movement guidelines and conduct pilot PE outbreak investigation studies with a view to developing PE guidelines for the whole region. The enthusiastic discussions, resulting recommendations and positive feedback on the event pointed to a successful step forward on the way to FMD control in the Upper Mekong Zone.