The international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), recognised by the World Trade Organization (WTO), are published in the OIE Codes and Manuals. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code) specifies health measures to be used by veterinary authorities to establish regulations for the safe importation of animals and animal products while avoiding unjustified trade restrictions. The Terrestrial Code does not specify diagnostic tests; it refers to the internationally-agreed methods published in the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals (Terrestrial Manual).

The Terrestrial Code is constantly revised in response to the needs of the OIE Member Countries. The Terrestrial Manual also undergoes constant review and revision in response to advances in diagnostic techniques and also in response to developments in the Terrestrial Code.

Recent developments in the Terrestrial Code which have significant implications for the Terrestrial Manual include new criteria for listing diseases notifiable to the OIE (adopted 2011), an on-going process of renaming Terrestrial Code chapters after the pathogen rather than the disease, and inclusion of epidemiologically significant wildlife species.

The addition of a disease to the list of those notifiable to the OIE requires the Biological Standards Commission to draft an appropriate chapter in the Terrestrial Manual. However, on those rare occasions when diseases are delisted, Member Countries usually want the Terrestrial Manual chapter to be retained. This raises the question of when and how the Terrestrial Manual chapter on an unlisted disease will be revised. The pathogen-based approach to disease chapters in the Terrestrial Code requires that the Terrestrial Manual chapters, as they are revised, use the same disease description as used in the Terrestrial Code. It is also essential that case definitions are those used in the Terrestrial Code. The inclusion of epidemiologically significant wildlife species in some Terrestrial Code chapters presents a challenge for the Terrestrial Manual as few diagnostic tests have been adequately validated in wildlife.