A. Skill Needs Indicators
Skill shortages occur when the skills sought by employers are not available in the pool of potential recruits, whereas skill surpluses occur when the supply of certain skills is higher than the demand for them. The OECD Skill Needs Indicators measure the degree of shortage (positive values) and surplus (negative values) for a range of dimensions, such as skills, abilities and knowledge.

B. Occupational clusters
Jobs can be grouped based on the similarities in the intensity and level of skills use (i.e. their skill profiles). Individuals in occupations with similar skill profiles may, nonetheless, have very different labour market outcomes in terms of wages, employment and skill matching, being either in shortage or in surplus. Moderate re-training or up-skilling can help these individuals move from jobs with poor labour market prospects (surpluses) to others with a brighter wage and employment outlook, by filling shortages in the labour market. In Spain, for example, Stationary plant and machine operators (occupation 81, in surplus) could move relatively easily into assemblers jobs (82, in shortage) with moderate training in content (e.g. reading comprehension) and system (e.g. judgement and decision making) skills. Other career changes, as for instance a switch to Metal and machinery trades jobs (72, in shortage), are possible although requiring more substantial training.
C. Mismatch Indicators

Individuals can be mismatched to their job in terms of qualification level and field of study. Qualification mismatch describes a situation for which a worker has qualifications that exceed (over-qualification) or do not meet (under-qualification) those generally required for the job. Field-of-study mismatch arises when workers are employed in a different field from what they have specialised in.

Useful links
Skills for Jobs web tool – http://www.skills.fes.ifi.ahs

Further information
Data for skill imbalances refer to year 2014, data on qualification and field-of-study mismatch refer to year 2015.

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