

Natalia Fabra

"I want to bring research into the public sphere to show society where research can contribute to improve energy and climate policy."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Natalia Fabra is professor of Economics at Universidad Carlos III Madrid and head of EnergyEcoLab.

Extensive analysis of electricity markets inspired her to create EnergyEcoLab, a Spain-based laboratory for rigorous analysis of various environmental and energy policy issues, nationally and across the whole Europe.

Fabra has been studying Economics since 1993 and received a PhD for research on market power in electricity markets in 2001.

In 2014, she was awarded with the Sabadell-Herrero Prize for Best Young Spanish Economist.

Impacting Future Energy Policies on the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy

Based at University Carlos III of Madrid, EnergyEcoLab brings together a group of researchers committed to carrying out rigorous policy-relevant research in the area of Energy and Environmental Economics. Using theoretical, empirical, and simulation tools, researchers at EnergyEcoLab explore market design and policy issues that arise in the transition to a low carbon economy.

“Health and wellbeing, prices people pay for energy, the way they can move in cities and around the globe, jobs, salaries, and so on. The fact that these issues are high on the policy agenda contributed – and still do – to highlighting the social value of our research, thus making knowledge transfer more impactful.”, says Natalia Fabra.

Head of the lab, Fabra's main motivation to further develop the EnergyEcoLab and share the results with the public sphere is the belief that, as a receiver of public funds, she has the responsibility to return to society what she has received and to show what has been paid for.

A key element from the story of EnergyEcoLab is to note that it is important to remind oneself sometimes that it takes a lot of time and resources to gain funding to bring knowledge into society. However, funds create a multiplying effect by which more valorisation can be carried out, which in turn provides a powerful incentive to carry out more socially relevant research.

“Policies in this area affect a wide array of issues that people feel directly concerned about.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS

& ADVICE

Knowledge transfer takes time and resources, but their effects are multiplying, offering more possibilities to perform socially relevant research.

Show the public sphere what happens with public funds – their money. Show that research contributes to their daily lives.

Consider various ways of communicating about your research. Use online channels, social media, and ask for help if you don't know how to do it.

Give valorisation a try even if you don't have any experience in valorisation projects. It is worth the effort, not only to get your work done, but also as an incentive to serve society as a whole.

“We have the responsibility to return to society what we have received. Doing this contributes to my passion, our team spirit and future research.”