# SYN BEE

# D6.2 – SYNBEE Website

**Grant Agreement: 101100509**

| VERSION | 1.0 |
|---|---|
| WORK PACKAGE No | 6 – Communication, Dissemination, Exploitation of results |
| LED BENEFICIARY | F6S |
| AUTHORS | Anja Stipankov, Catarina Reis |
| REVIEWERS | ALL PARTNERS |
| DATA | 31/05/2023 |
| TYPE | R – DOCUMENT, REPORT |
| DISSEMINATION LEVEL | CONFIDENTIAL |

| VERSION | DATE | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 1.0 | 24/04/2023 | First version for review |
| 2.0 | 26/04/2023 | Second version for review. |
| 3.0 | 29/05/2023 | Final version for review. |
| 4.0 | 15/06/2023 | Final version. |

# Table of Contents

## Index of Figures

# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current deliverable presents the preliminary work done for the design and development of the first version of the SYNBEE website.

The communication team, consulting with the coordinator, aimed to design a modern website that reflects the approach, 'look and feel', and the overall aesthetic of the SYNBEE branding defined in the "D6.1 Finalized Dissemination and Communication Plan", following the main goal, which was to represent SYNBEE as a knowledge, resources and an informative pool targeting the synbio community. Thus, the general scope of the SYNBEE website is to:

- Provide the project's visual identity and be always available to anyone,
- Be easily found through a search engine,
- Have a wider outreach than other more traditional means,
- Generate growth and deliver strong messages.

The website has been launched in M5 of the project, as a key instrument to support the SYNBEE community and the European synbio innovation ecosystem. The website will be a "living" tool, thus it will be updated throughout the project, most intensively when sharing synbio resources and promoting activities organised by SYNBEE team, such as hackathons, pitch competitions, mentoring and seminars. The final version of the website will be reported in the final technical report of the project.

# 2 OBJECTIVES

The website is one of the most important features of the project for communication with all the different target groups.

Nowadays, it is a very common method of communication for multiple reasons. A well-organized and user-friendly site will target the audience to search even more, so a representative website is a key activity of any project. Apart from the fact that a site helps to spread the news faster, it has the power to educate and inspire people delivering strong ideas and values.

Within this framework, the SYNBEE website aims to stimulate interest in the project and raise awareness about synthetic biology, while at the same time it allows the user to follow up the project achievements and results. Following the SYNBEE mission to enhance the entrepreneurial and business skills of young professionals interested in synbio, the website serves additionally as the main point for information and attraction, thus it should be user-friendly, direct, and alluring.

The SYNBEE website is available at **www.synbee.eu** from 31st of May 2023, and its design and development were made considering certain objectives such as:

- **Demonstrate the project** and its mission, objectives, and results to the targeted and wider audience.
- **Inform the audience** about relevant networking events, groundbreaking and incremental technological innovation, arrival of new players, available non-dilutive funding, etc. within the synthetic biology industry in Europe.
- **Accessibility to main SYNBEE activities** and insights by providing easy-to-follow and user-friendly content about activities organised by SYNBEE, such as training and mentoring services, hackathons, pitch competitions, networking and matchmaking, events.
- **Communication channel** for linking to social media networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as inviting website visitors to join the mailing list to receive the SYNBEE newsletter.

In this way, the communication team exploited all the main advantages of the website as a digital tool, while taking into account the needs of the SYNBEE's key targeted players, such as synbio students, researchers, investors, companies, and all other stakeholders interested in this booming industry.

# 3 WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS

During the design and development of the project website, the communication team took into consideration multiple requirements from a literature review on the best practices to render a successful website. We seek to assure it meets accessibility standards and is gender neutral following well-established guidelines. Moreover, requirements set by the European Commission in the project's Grant Agreement were met.

## 3.1 ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

It is crucial to create Web content more accessible to people with special requirements[1]. These actions should take into consideration a wide range of sensitivities such as physical, speech, learning, visual, auditory, cognitive, and neurological special needs. Multiple factors can be taken into consideration, indicatively:

- **Colors:** information conveyed in color must be available also in other visual ways,
- Videos with low or no background audio. There is a suggestion that any audio does not confuse those with hearing problems,
- **Audio control:** the sound should be started by action initiated by the user, not automatically,
- **Sign language:** this aims to enable people who are deaf or hard of hearing to understand the content of the audio track of synchronized media presentations,
- **Text spacing** enables to derive the right meaning,
- **Only keyboard use:** navigation using only the keyboard helps those who have difficulties using devices as a mouse,
- **Include heading and labels to describe topic or purpose** helps to better understand the content,
- **User-friendly approach:** Web pages should appear and operate in predictable ways to increase visitors' focus.
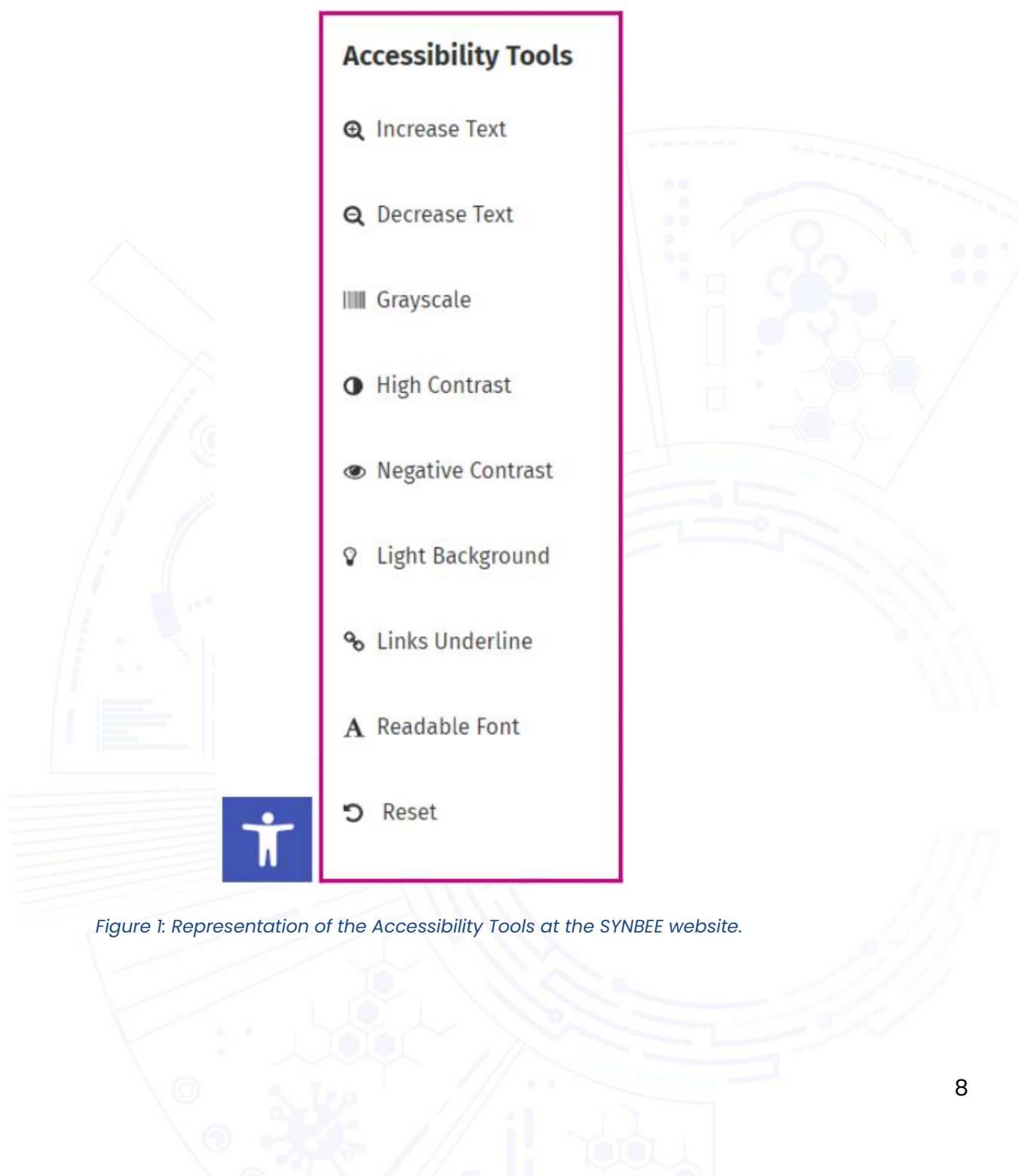
According to these requirements, the SYNBEE website was built in a structure that makes it easy for the visitor to navigate. It has a traditional form, and it operates in predictable ways, something that does not distract the visitor's focus. All images and subpages are labeled and

---

[1] Kirkpatrick, Andrew, et al. "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1." *W3C*, 5 June 2018, https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/.

organized, so that visitors can easily find the information they seek, understanding the relationships between different parts of the content. This is especially helpful to those who read at a slow pace or have short-term memory. In the SYNBEE website the text spacing was also carefully chosen, as people with low vision require increased space between lines, word, and letters in order to read the text.

At the SYNBEE website, the clickable accessibility icon with diverse accessibility tools availability is available at the landing page, immediately underneath the menu.



*Figure 1: Representation of the Accessibility Tools at the SYNBEE website.*

## 3.2 GENDER REQUIREMENTS

The SYNBEE consortium has been committed, since an early stage of the project, to actively promote gender equality and pay relevant attention to gender aspects and issues during the project implementation. For that reason, certain requirements have to be met in order for the SYNBEE website to be gender neutral and fulfill the provisions for equality among women and men for maximizing the impact the website has as a central dissemination tool.

Gender biases exist and are deeply ingrained in many modern technologies and practices such as website design. This is a consequence of the prevalence of male IT professionals and developers which results in the fact that the current majority of websites are dominated by the so-called "male design aesthetic".[2] [3] [4]

Such a fact can have a significant impact on female user experience and participation while at the same time research has shown that in many cases men and women have different preferences in the layout design of a web portal or application.

Psychological and evolutionary studies have suggested a difference in how women and men see and process information. Notable examples are in color, word usage, and shapes which either due to genetic or psychological reasons, are perceived differently by individuals of different gender. There are distinct elements in a website interface design that will be preferred by either men or women, and websites can be made to specifically target one gender using these principles. According to literature the essential elements of a gender-neutral website are:

- Nature imagery in background and present throughout interface,
- Rounded corners, but less so than a female biased interface,
- Minimal language use, and in a casual but non-conversational tone when in use. It is obvious that special care must be taken to the use of gendered language,
- A mix of widely placed content but in a vertical scrolling area in browser friendly fields.

---

[2] Moss G., Gunn R., Kubacki K., 2008. Gender and web design: The implications of the mirroring principle for the services branding model. Journal of Marketing Communications, 14 (1), 37-57.

[3] Simon S. J., 2000. The impact of culture and gender on web sites: an empirical study. ACM SIGMIS Database, 32 (1), 18-37.

[4] Barth, Derrick. Designing the Gender-Neutral User Experience. Diss. WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, 2012.

Further elements of a gender-neutral website related to color are:

- The use of strong contrasts between any background color and the overlying text,
- Background behind text solid and plain,
- One dominant color in headings and borders with bright tones are better,
- Visual interest can be provided with contrast colors complementary or closely related to the website dominant color,
- Colors that closely relate to primary or secondary colors, when possible, can be selected,
- Color elements such neon, pastel, dark, discordant, or unusual should be avoided.

Considering these requirements, the SYNBEE website attempts to overcome and go beyond any existing gender norm by providing an innovative website interface design that includes a synthesis between male- and female-targeted interface designs in order to provide a gender-neutral user experience.

However, it has to be noted that even if much care and attention is given to this topic, there is no single recipe in approaching gender issues that have an inherent subjective aspect. Before going online, the SYNBEE website design has been assessed both by male and female professionals. Further assessment of the website design will be provided during the project implementation and the appropriate modifications will be applied when and where needed.

## 3.3 REQUIREMENTS FROM THE GRANT AGREEMENT

According to the Grant Agreement, the project communication team is required to design an attractive and informative website as the main point of reference for the project. The website should introduce the project website and its training and mentoring services, offering access to downloadable material and providing updates on its activities. All the public results created within the project should be available through the website, including deliverables, promotional videos, guidelines and materials from the project training and mentoring services such as webinars, MOOCs, hackathons, and pitch competitions.

The website was designed according to the obligations set by the EC. Thus, it displays the EU emblem and the statement that the project has received funding from a specific EU programme under a specific grant agreement number in a prominent place.

# 4  WEBSITE DESIGN AND CONTENT

The website was envisioned as visually oriented and interactive, with a friendly tone of voice. It is following the official brand identity and targets all identified stakeholders and consists of the basic information that elaborates the project's key points as well as several calls to actions, available through the following main website sections:

- **Home page** - This website section represents an overview of the project, elaborates SYNBEE's mission and objectives, while introducing SYNBEE Consortium, and inviting website visitors to follow our other communication actions, such as social media profiles and a call to action to the project's newsletter.
- **About page** - This website section includes a systematically organised representation of different toolkits related to SYNBEE activities, such as a public relations and media toolkit or publicly available reports and deliverables.
- **Insights page** - This website section represents an informative pool of synbio networking opportunities (events, conferences, seminars), new technologies represented via blog articles and SYNBEE news represented via PR articles and newsletter articles.
- **Activities page** - This website section will be divided into four main subsections related to SYNBEE hackathons, seminars, pitch competitions and mentoring activities. Each section will further elaborate a specific activity organised by the SYNBEE team.
- **Knowledge base page** - This website section will represent a pool of publicly available resources provided by the SYNBEE Consortium members with a goal to share them with the synbio enthusiasts.
- **Contact page** - This website section represents the possibility for all interested parties to contact us and leave any comment they feel is relevant.

*Note*: *Due to the agility of the project, the website sections above might be subject to changes or future developments.*

The content of the website will be displayed using the different social media channels of the project. The SYNBEE website statistics will be regularly monitored by the Communication Manager.

## 4.1 WEBSITE DESIGN

From the very beginning of the project, F6S bought and secured one domain for the project for the next seven years: **www.synbee.eu**

This selection was made to ensure that all the interested stakeholders could easily find SYNBEE's website. Since F6S is the leader of the design and development of the website, F6S has been given the access rights for the administration of the above-mentioned domain.

The hosting service was bought by F6S. An email account which the public will be able to address for any issue relevant to the SYNBEE project and its open calls has been created: **info@synbee.eu**. This account will be included in all used dissemination tools, such as the project website, social media accounts, printed material, etc.

The SYNBEE website is running in WordPress, which is a popular, well-supported publishing platform that is supported by a wide community of developers which will minimize the complexity of the ongoing design.

The first task concerning the website design was the selection of the most appropriate template that could cover the needs of the project. After thorough research and brainstorming, the communication team agreed on a website template that is modern and dynamic and offers the opportunity for continuous modifications. F6S bought this template and customized it according to the project requirements.

Having a sitemap that is constructed with a clear goal in mind could be a driving factor to a website's success. This is due to the fact that a well-structured sitemap will make a site easily searchable and will provide visitors with more accurate results when they are looking for keywords or key terms that are associated with it. The site crawlers used by search engines depend on sitemaps to point visitors in the direction of the correct website.

According to the sitemap provided by the communication team, a graphic designer from F6S designed mockups of the website in the tool named Figma, on which the communication team brainstormed and made crucial modifications.
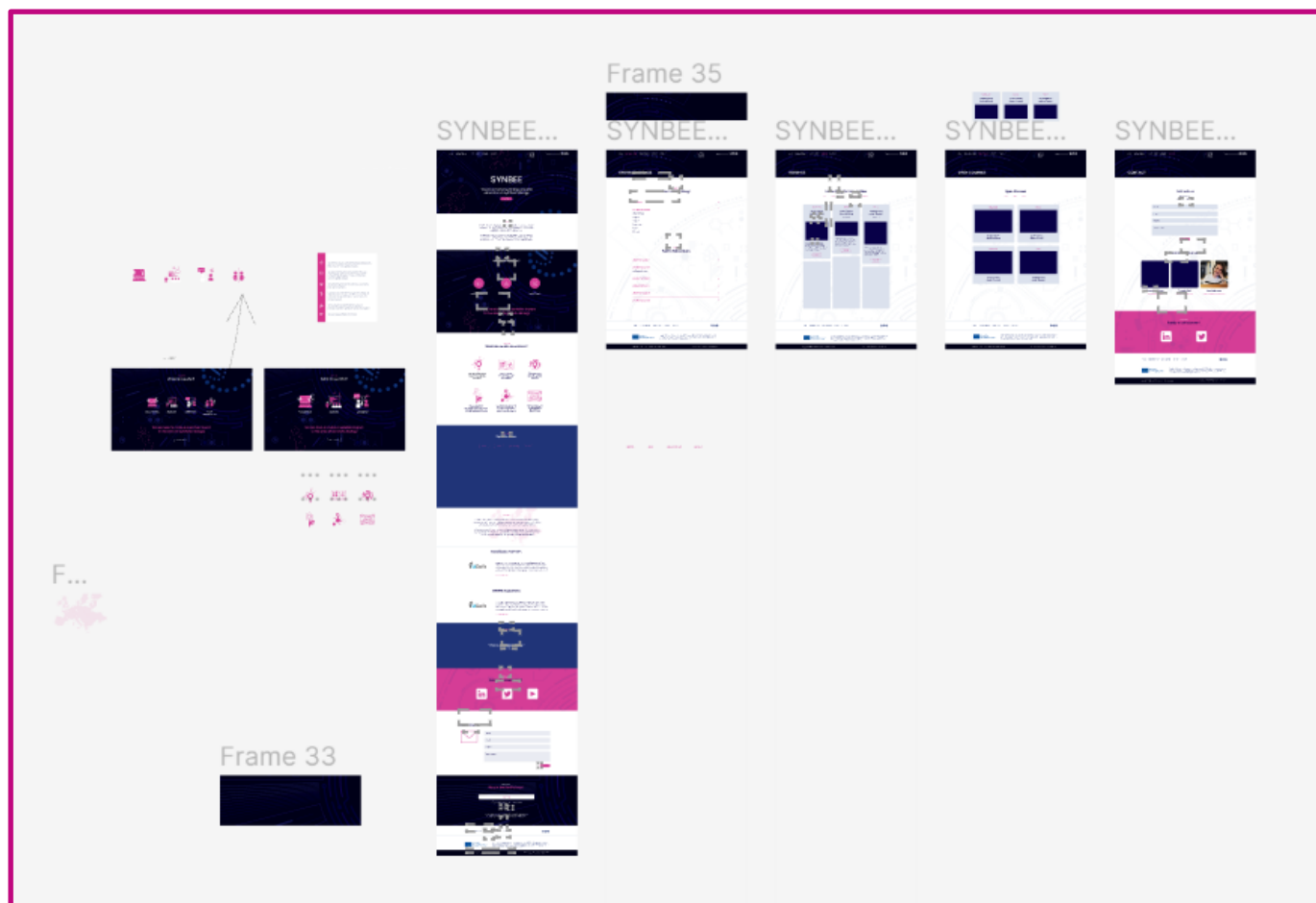
*Figure 2:Mockups and frames of the SYNBEE website.*

After this procedure, the final version of the website interface was designed. The website has been designed in an easy way to navigate that allows users to learn about the SYNBEE knowledge pool community, the provided services, up-to-date activities, and the delivered results.

There are sections that were foreseen on the website and are developed in the backend, such as Activities page and Knowledge pool page, but until all necessary content is available, they cannot be visualized. In the sections below we are presenting the different pages of the project website that are already available to the public.

## 4.2 CONTENT

Currently the SYNBEE website is comprised of the following sections:

- **HOME**,
- **ABOUT**,
- **INSIGHTS** and
- **CONTACT**.

The content will be regularly updated when a milestone is reached (e.g., when the hackathons will be ready to launch). Moreover, as the communication team seeks to reach the most effective website implementation strategy, the current design of the website might be subject to changes and further enhancements during the lifetime of the project.

### 4.2.1 HOME

When visitors access the SYNBEE website, they are landing in a homepage where they are able to see the most important information about the SYNBEE project, such as:

- SYNBEE tagline,
- SYNBEE storyline,
- Main SYNBEE services/activities,
- SYNBEE objectives,
- Synbio news,
- Introduction to the SYNBEE Consortium members,
- Testimonials,
- Call to action towards social media and SYNBEE newsletter,
- EU acknowledgement and SYNBEE disclaimer,
- Information about the implemented website policies.

On the top of the website there is a menu that helps the visitor to navigate. It consists of the tabs: Home, About, Insights and Contact. Next to the menu there is a search field that enables the visitor to search content with keywords. Moreover, in the menu bar there are also shortcuts to the SYNBEE social media channels, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.
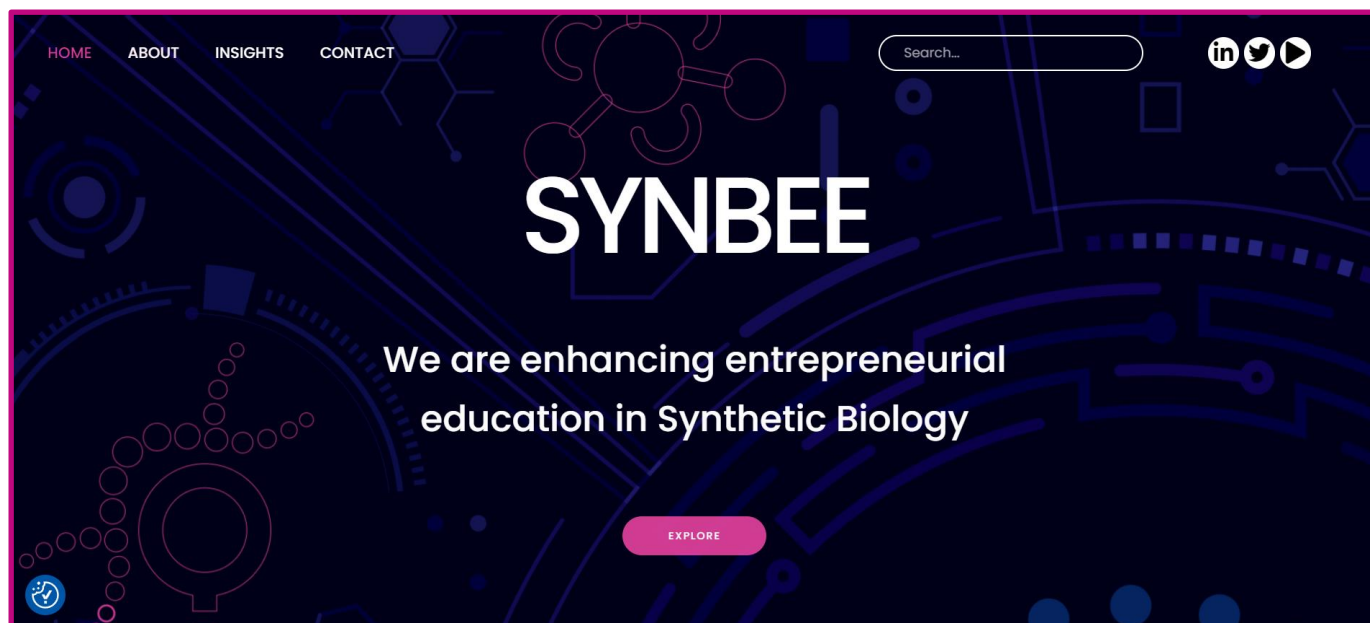
*Figure 3:Home page: Header.*

The "explore" button underneath the SYNBEE tagline leads to the "About" page, where interested parties can download the SYNBEE PR toolkit to learn more about the project.

A short overview of the SYNBEE mission and the representation of the main objectives and SYNBEE services is also showcased on the landing page.
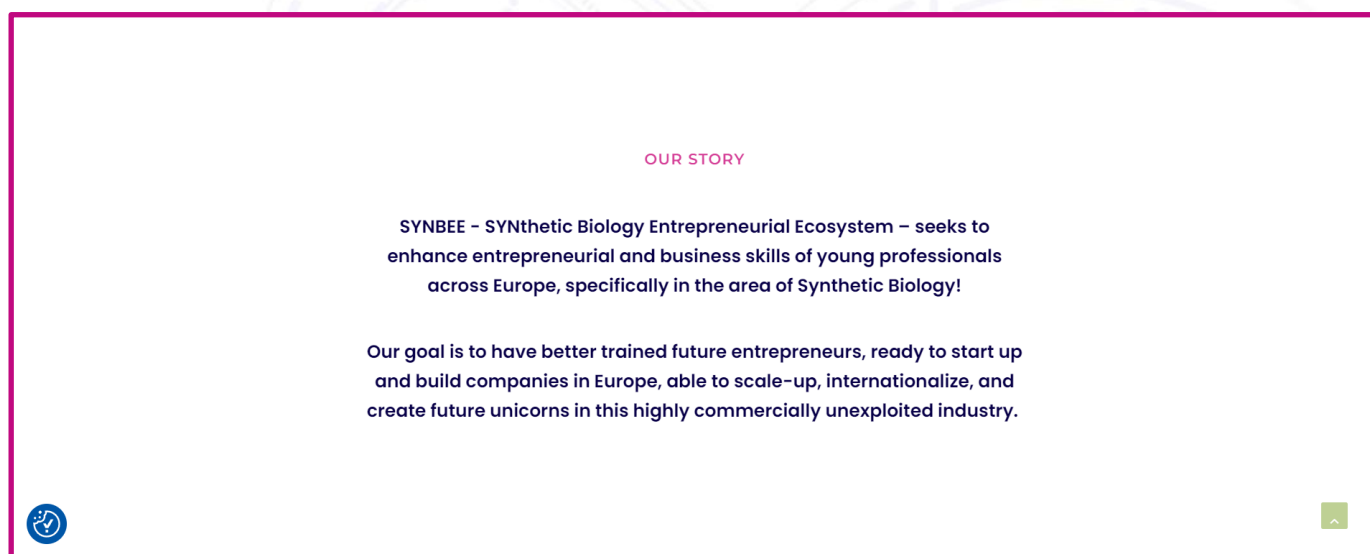


OUR STORY

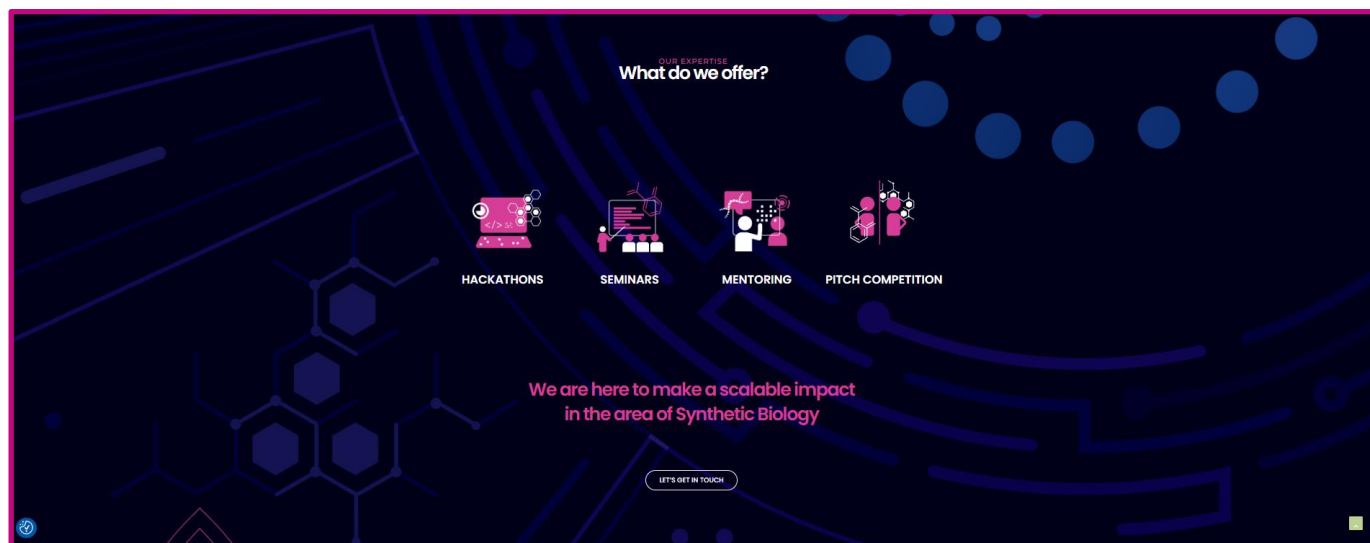SYNBEE - SYNthetic Biology Entrepreneurial Ecosystem – seeks to enhance entrepreneurial and business skills of young professionals across Europe, specifically in the area of Synthetic Biology!

Our goal is to have better trained future entrepreneurs, ready to start up and build companies in Europe, able to scale-up, internationalize, and create future unicorns in this highly commercially unexploited industry.

*Figure 4: Home page: Our story section.*

*Figure 5: Home page: Our expertise section.*
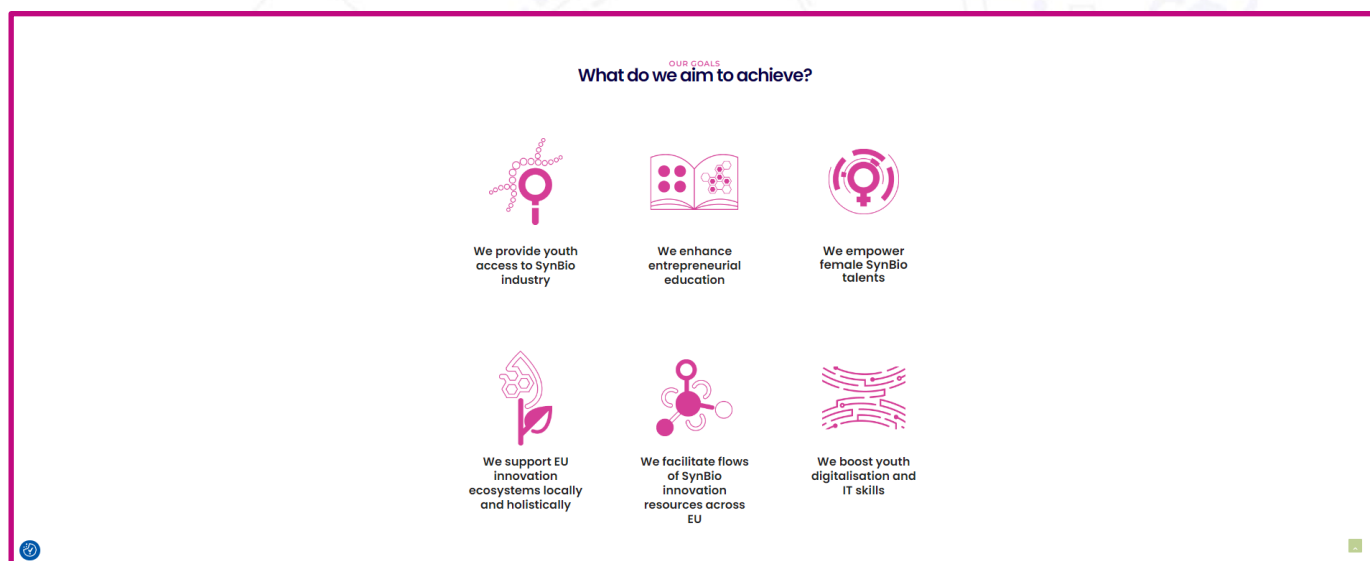


*Figure 6: Home page: Our goals section.*

On this page, the visitor can also see a sneak preview of the blog posts that have already been published by the SYNBEE team.
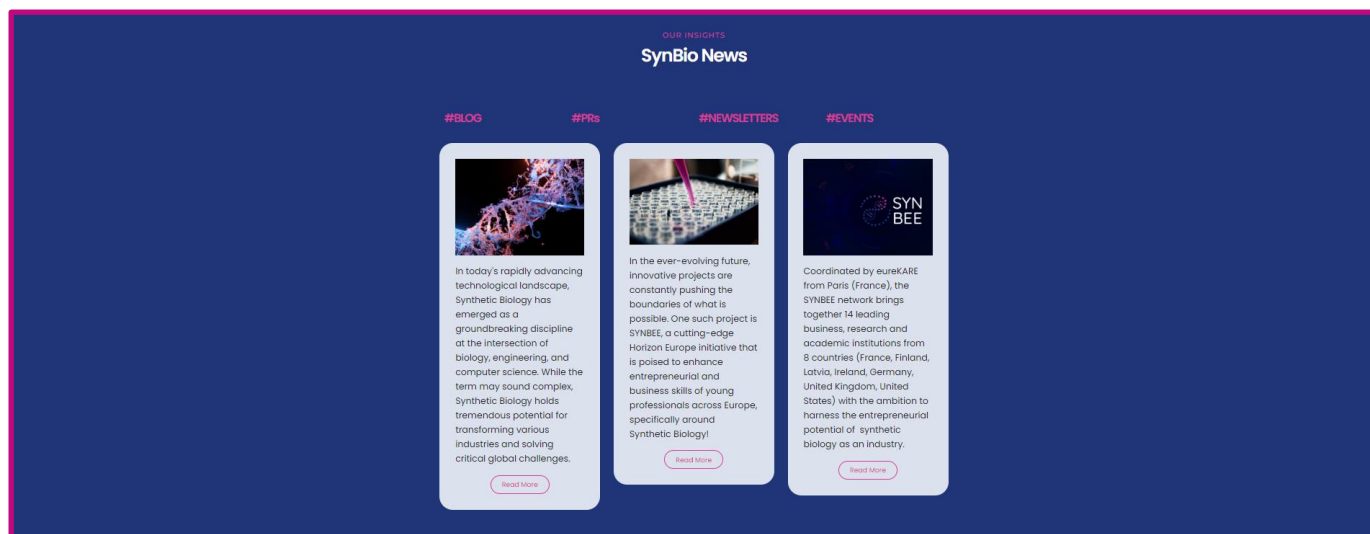
*Figure 7: Home page: Synbio news section.*

Moreover, on the landing page there is a section about the SYNBEE team, followed by the slider with a brief representation of each member of the SYNBEE Consortium.
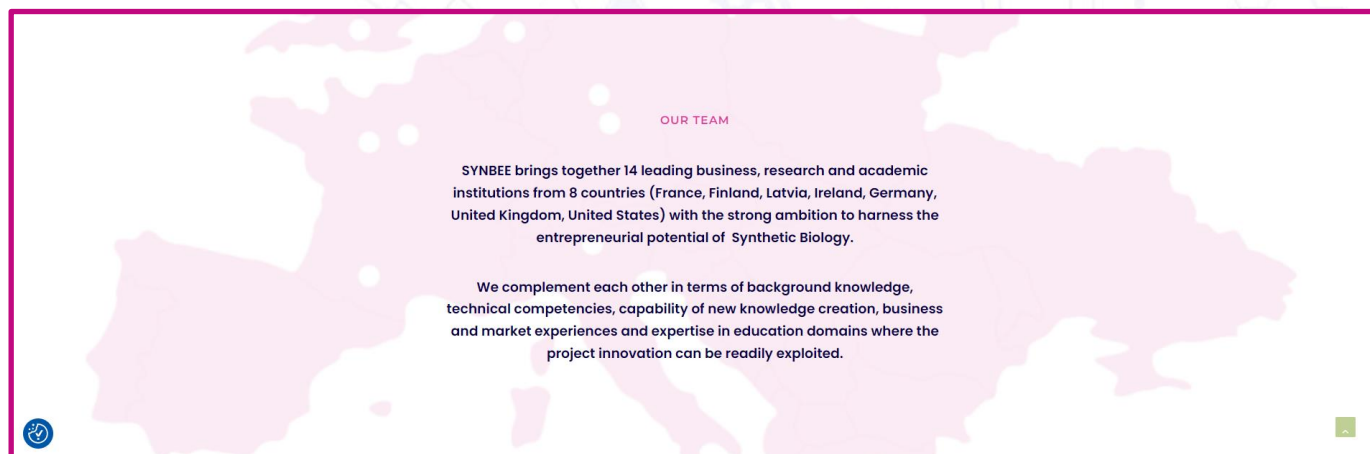


*Figure 8: Home page: Our team section.*

After learning more about the SYNBEE team, the visitor has a chance to read testimonials about SYNBEE and to easily find SYNBEE's social media accounts.
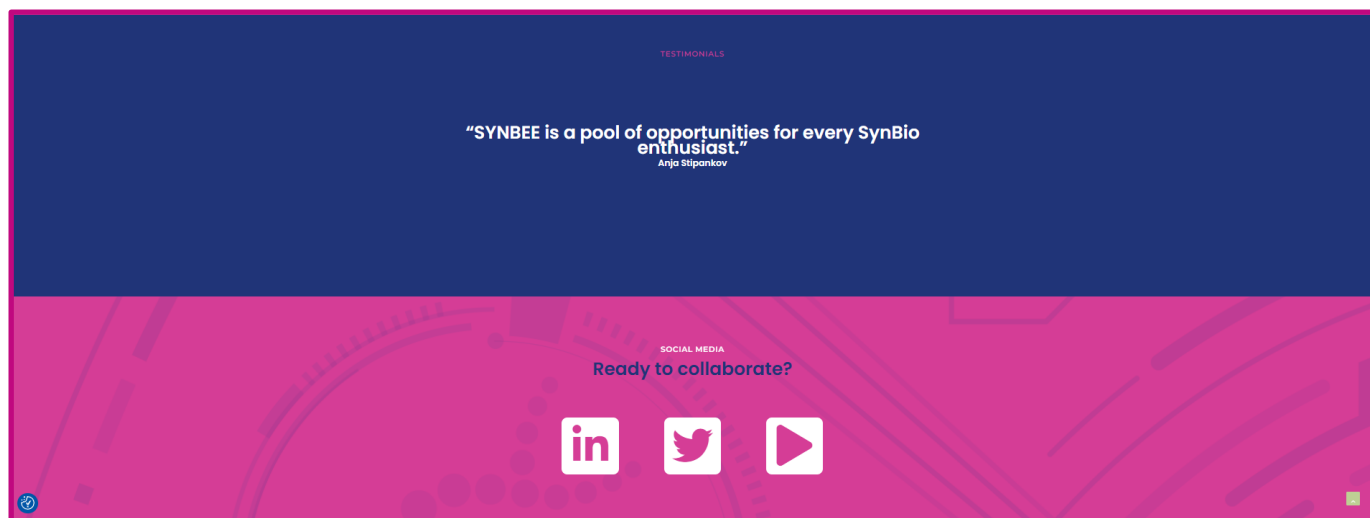
*Figure 9: Home page: Testimonials and Social media section.*

Moreover, the visitor can easily get in touch with the SYNBEE team or join our newsletter.
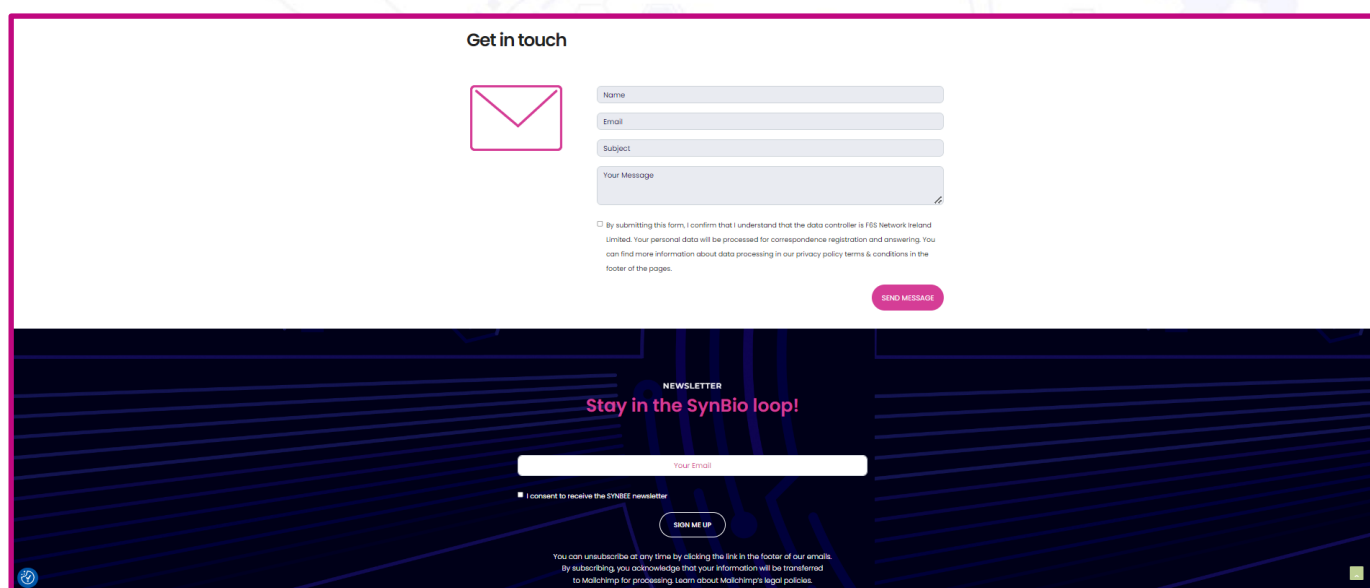


*Figure 10: Home page: Contact and Newsletter section.*

The footer of the website is static for all the different subpages and presents the same information about the menu, shortcuts to the social media channels, with a clear disclaimer about the project funding accompanied by the EU emblem. Finally, the copyright of the website and a link to its Privacy Policy and Cookie Policy are included in the footer.

*Figure 11: Home page: Footer.*

## 4.2.2 ABOUT

The "About" section is next in the main menu of the SYNBEE website. This section is organised systematically and (for now) contains two main subsections:

- Media and
- Reports/Public deliverables.

The objective of this section is to contain publicly available information about SYNBEE, which targets media agencies, journalists, as well as synbio enthusiasts. Therefore, the "Media" subsection contains PR toolkit and brand toolkit, while the "Reports" subsection contains information about authorized public deliverables defined by the Grant Agreement.

Due to the agile nature of SYNBEE, there is a possibility that the "About" page will be further updated in the future with other information about the project, such as promotional materials, links of media coverage by third parties, YouTube videos and similar.
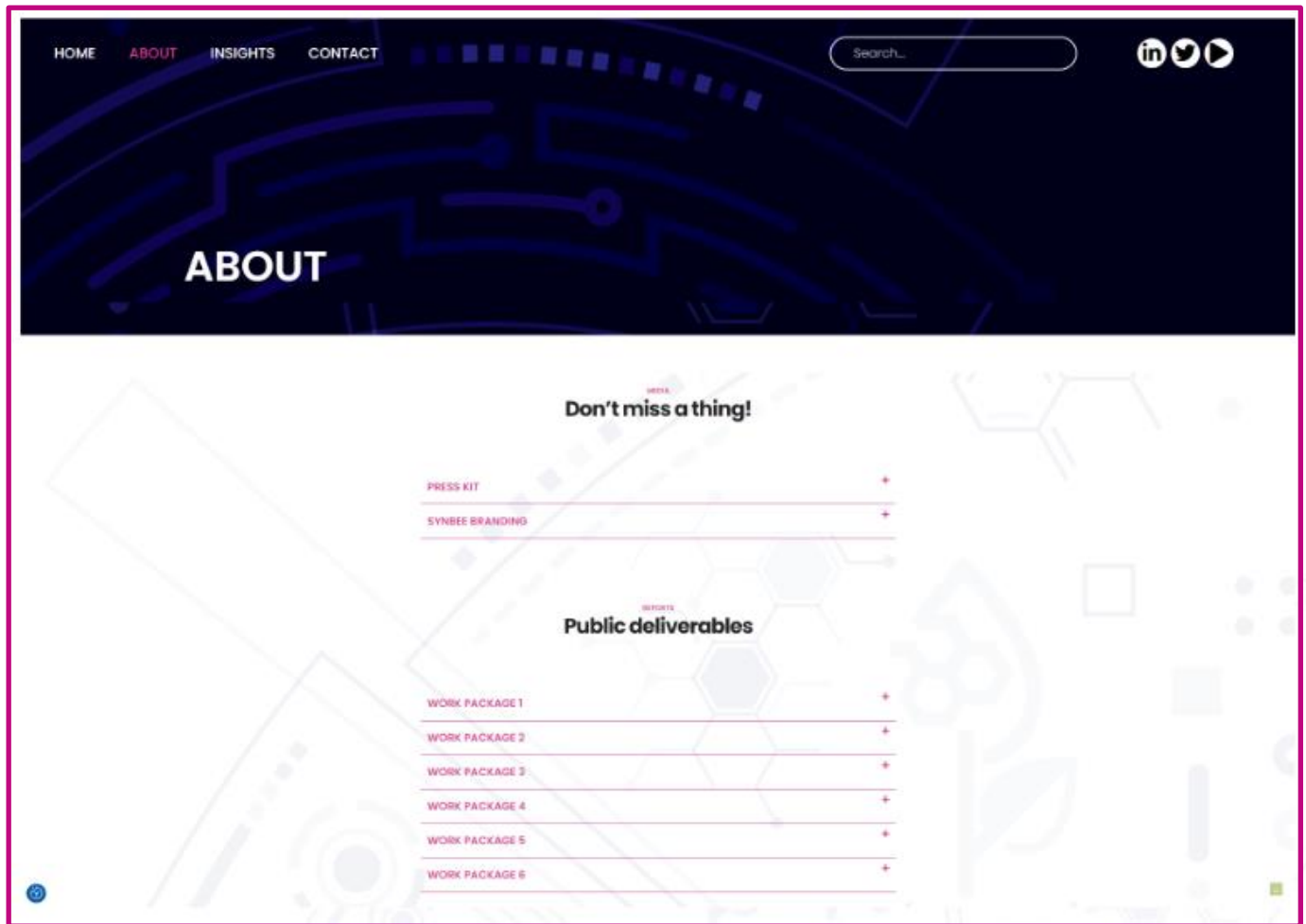
*Figure 12: "About" page.*

### 4.2.3 INSIGHTS

The objective of the "Insights" page on the SYNBEE website is to represent a holistic overview of the up-to-date information related to synthetic biology. Thus, this page will contain the following:

- Information about the European and global **networking opportunities** like events, conferences, seminars, workshops within synbio industry organised by SYNBEE, as well as third parties.
- **Blog articles** which elaborate trends and news related to synbio, such as information on new technology developments or other relevant innovations. The majority of articles will be developed by the SYNBEE Consortium as a part of the Growth Marketing strategy which has the goal to lead and generate traffic to the website. However, some articles

will be published as part of the Link building strategy, which has the goal to reuse the articles from other relevant synbio stakeholders, while emphasizing the writing authorities of the respective author(s).

- Information about **SYNBEE Newsletters** will also be published in this website section, together with the Information about **SYNBEE PRs**.

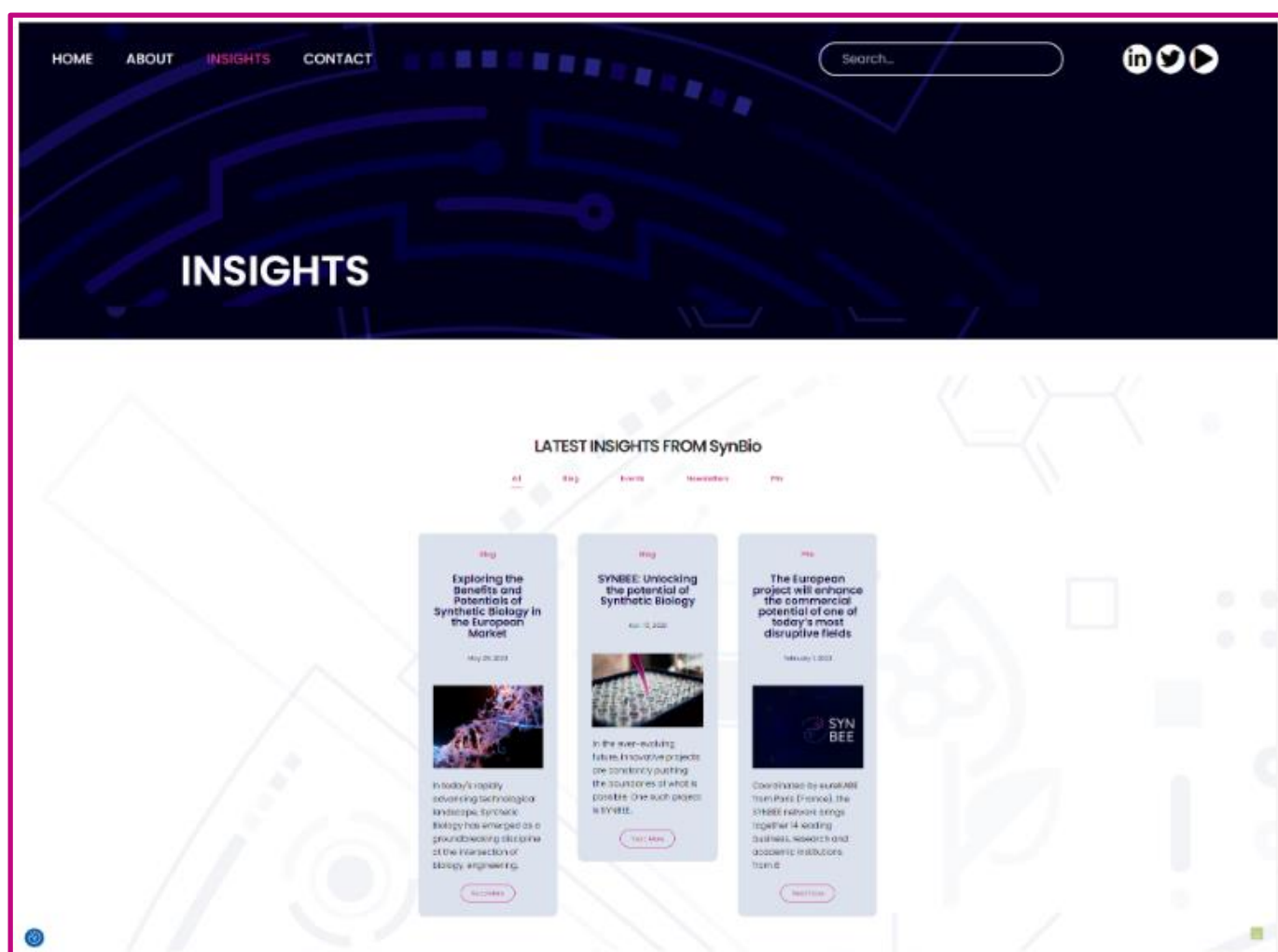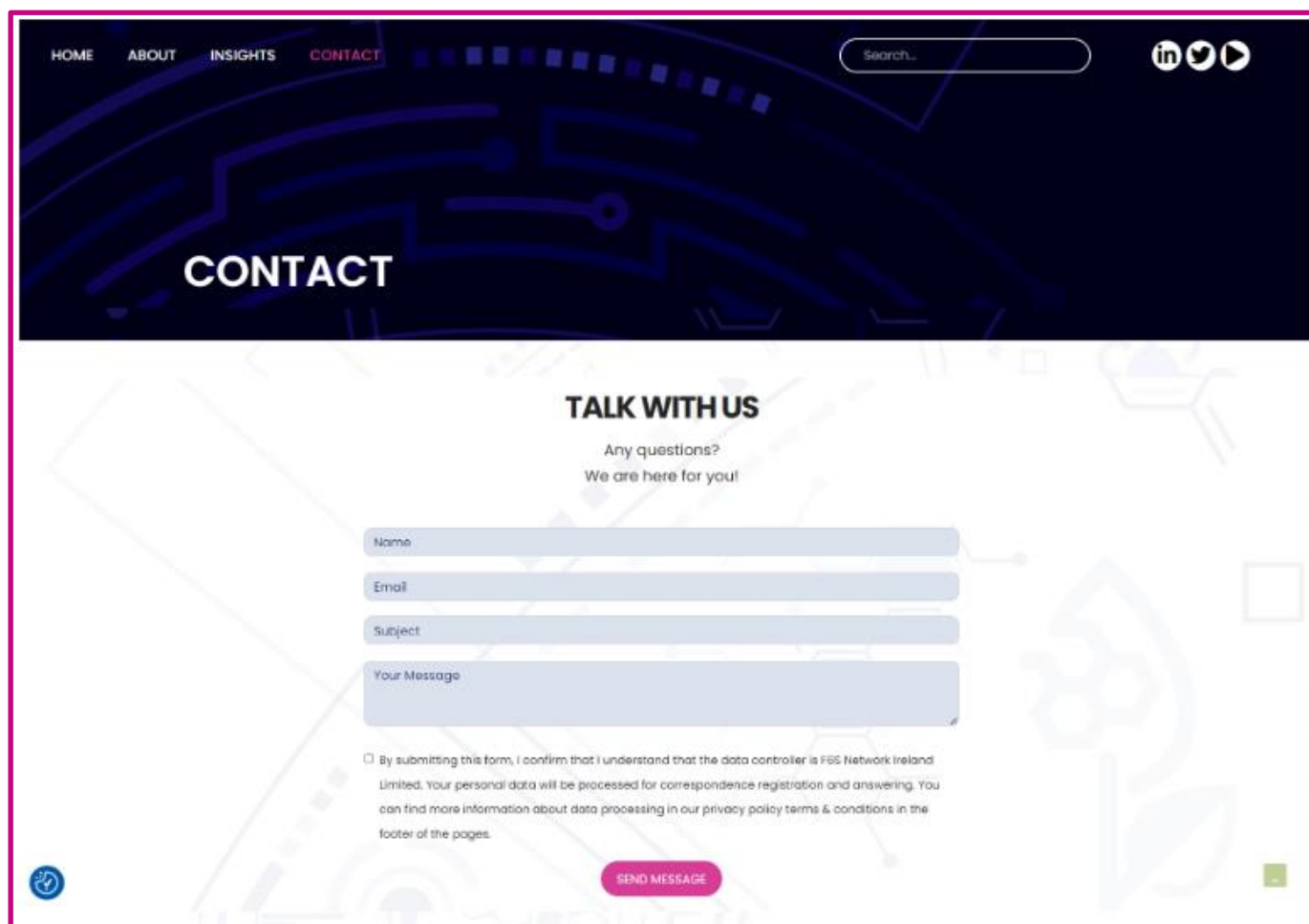The Insights page has a filter option for each of the previously described categories, to ensure the effective search of the available content.



Figure 13: "Insights" page.

## 4.2.4 CONTACT

This is the final main page in the menu, where visitors can find information about contacting the SYNBEE team and ask for support. eureKARE as the Project Coordinator and F6S as the leader of the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation of results will be responsible for providing support through the project's email address. If needed, enquiries, comments, and information will be forwarded to project partners.



*Figure 14: Contact page.*

Moreover, to add up a human-feeling to the project, the "Contact" page contains a specific section named "Communication team".

*Figure 15: Contact page: Communication team.*

# 5 CONCLUSIONS

The SYNBEE website that was launched in M5 is the first version of the project website.

Taking into consideration that the website is a "living" tool, it will be regularly updated. When the webinars, workshops, hackathons, pitch competitions, events and the MOOCs are launched, the landing page of the website will be modified to focus on this opportunity and provide easy-to-understand instructions to applicants.

The website was designed and developed taking into consideration the specific needs of the visitors that should be addressed, the branding guidelines that were created by the SYNBEE communication team, the ease of accessibility and navigation through multiple layers, gender neutrality, the Grant Agreement requirements, and finally the helpfulness of the content, since it should be informative and help visitors better understand what SYNBEE is about.

## References

[1] Kirkpatrick, Andrew, et al. "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1." *W3C*, 5 June 2018, https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/. Accessed 29 May 2023.

[2] Moss G., Gunn R., Kubacki K., 2008. Gender and web design: The implications of the mirroring principle for the services branding model. Journal of Marketing Communications, 14 (1), 37-57.

[3] Simon S. J., 2000. The impact of culture and gender on web sites: an empirical study. ACM SIGMIS Database, 32 (1), 18-37.

[4] Barth, Derrick. Designing the Gender-Neutral User Experience. Diss. WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, 2012.