Have an idea which could make life easier, simpler or better. Clearly identify an opportunity or a problem and match it to an Award.

REMEMBER
At any stage of your project you might need or want to do some research so that you can make decisions based on real information. Use information to back up a hunch or idea.

Your Aim

Spend some time thinking!

A really important process that you need to start with is thinking as widely as possible. You and your team members need to generate lots of ideas so that you have a good basis to use to focus in on your final project.

Set aside some thinking time. Prepare for your challenge individually, by looking at the Awards and thinking about them before you meet. When you meet as a team, everyone will then be able to take part and share their ideas and think of new ones; be open-minded and let the ideas flow without judgement. This is the time to be imaginative, quirky, inventive and as creative as possible with your thinking. Don’t judge the ideas at this point.

Generating ideas

Choose the form that suits you best for example; a spider diagram, post-it notes, lists, ideas board, Word.doc, PPT slide. You could use, software available in your school such as MindView or ? (free software) or take photographs of your notes. This evidence of your team’s creative and thinking process can be used in your Innovation Log.

REMEMBER
Being creative can be a messy process that might take some time. You may need to have several thinking sessions individually and as a group.

If you are having problems coming up with ideas, look carefully at the Award Categories; what areas have been identified for development. Find out about the Award by doing some background RESEARCH into the area. This should give you an idea of what has already been done or is available as a product e.g. a basic search on “wearable technology” will bring up news articles and businesses that you can explore that will tell you what is already available and what it is possible to do at the moment. If you need support with your searches ask your school Librarian to help you search or discuss your ideas with your teacher.
You could use the Thinking Hats idea to help you think about your ideas from different angles. You could all wear the same hat (Green) when thinking up new ideas and choose different hats when you are looking more closely at each idea. Using the hat system makes sure that you have thought about the idea from lots of different angles.

**White** – What do I already know? What do I need to know?

**Green** – What is possible? What new ideas do I have? IDEAS

**Black** – What are the possible problems? NEGATIVES/CAUTIONS

**Yellow** – What are the strengths of this idea? Why will it work? POSITIVES

**Blue** – What have we done so far – what do we need to do next? PLAN

**Red** – How do I feel about this? HUNCH, GUT FEELINGS

By the end of this thinking process, you should ask yourself:

1. **What is the team goal?** (What problem do we want to solve and what are our main ideas. Which Award(s) are we aiming for?)

2. **What are our requirements?** (materials, time)

3. **What are our limitations?** (How long do we have to do the project in school/outside of school?)

4. **What do we need to do next?** (plan, research & contact, make, evaluate)

You could put your ideas into a process such as Design thinking that will take you through your project:

1. **EMPATHIZE**
   Develop a deep understanding of the challenge

2. **DEFINE**
   Clearly articulate the problem you want to solve

3. **EMPATHIZE**
   Brainstorm potential solutions. Select and develop your solution

4. **PROTOTYPE**
   Design a prototype (or series of prototypes) to test all of part of your solution

5. **TEST**
   Engage in a continuous short-cycle innovation process to continually improve your design