

ICEBERG MODEL

WHAT

Tool to better understand an existing situation. Stimulates a group to look beyond the observable facts to underlying patterns, structures and mental models.

WHEN TO USE

■ **Stage(s):** Preparation & setup , prototyping

■ **Goal:** interrogating existing knowledge

■ **Type:** systems thinking

■ **Time & Effort:** 1 - 2 hrs



HOW TO USE

■ Draw an iceberg on a flip chart. The tip of the iceberg (10%) represents the observable events. The remaining 90% is under water and invisible.

■ The first layer below the surface represents patterns, things that evolve over time, trends we observe.

■ The second layer represents the structure that sustains the trends and legitimate the causes.

■ The bottom layer are the Mental Models that drive our behaviour and typically maintain the existing structure or lead to change.

■ Try to identify the different layers of the iceberg in group. The goal is to see that the visible events are caused by underlying patterns, structures and models.

ICEBERG MODEL

STRENGTHS

- Triggers deeper analysis and reflection on observed events.
- Allows changing the root causes instead of the symptoms.
- Can be done in large or small groups.

WEAKNESSES

- Not easy to apply to more complex issues with many different mental models.
- Does not offer an action plan or to do list as outcome of the exercise.

Source:

[Iceberg Model Explained \(systemsinnovation.io\)](https://systemsinnovation.io) available on teams
Iceberg model - YouTube