**Stage 1**
*Start research:*
Carry out / update systematic review & meta-analysis

- Results conclusive *?*
  - **Yes:** Stop research
  - **No:**

**Stage 2**
Would further analysis of existing data assist in answering unresolved research questions?

- **No:**
  - e.g. Effectiveness in some population subgroups may be uncertain
  - e.g. Effectiveness compared to other active comparators may be uncertain

- **Yes:**
  - Consider carrying out an IPD meta-analysis
  - Consider carrying out a mixed treatment comparison synthesis

- Results conclusive *?*
  - **Yes:** Stop research
  - **No:**

**Stage 3**
Conduct (further) trials basing design on the current synthesis model (or the best available evidence in the first instance)

**Part 1:** Efficient analysis of the existing evidence base

**Part 2:** Designing future research more coherently