

# Research to impact for PrEP delivery for young women in South Africa: Reflections from mapping knowledge, program and research gaps

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## BACKGROUND

Oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a pill taken daily, to reduce the risk of HIV. South Africa (SA) is now providing PrEP to priority populations, including adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). Strides have been made to better understand how to deliver PrEP to AGYW but there remain questions where further insights are needed along the PrEP value chain (Figure 1). To address these gaps in knowledge and ensure a collaborative approach, the NDoH requested an analysis of ongoing and planned AGYW PrEP implementation projects and trials in SA. The aim was to investigate what questions were being addressed, to determine if additional research investments are necessary, and provide an understanding of when insights across the key questions would become available.



Figure 1: PrEP Value Chain

## METHODS

Through the USAID-funded OPTIONS project, a mapping and analysis of AGYW oral PrEP implementation projects and trials in South Africa was conducted in 2016, 2017 and 2019 using a 6-stage process (Figure 2):

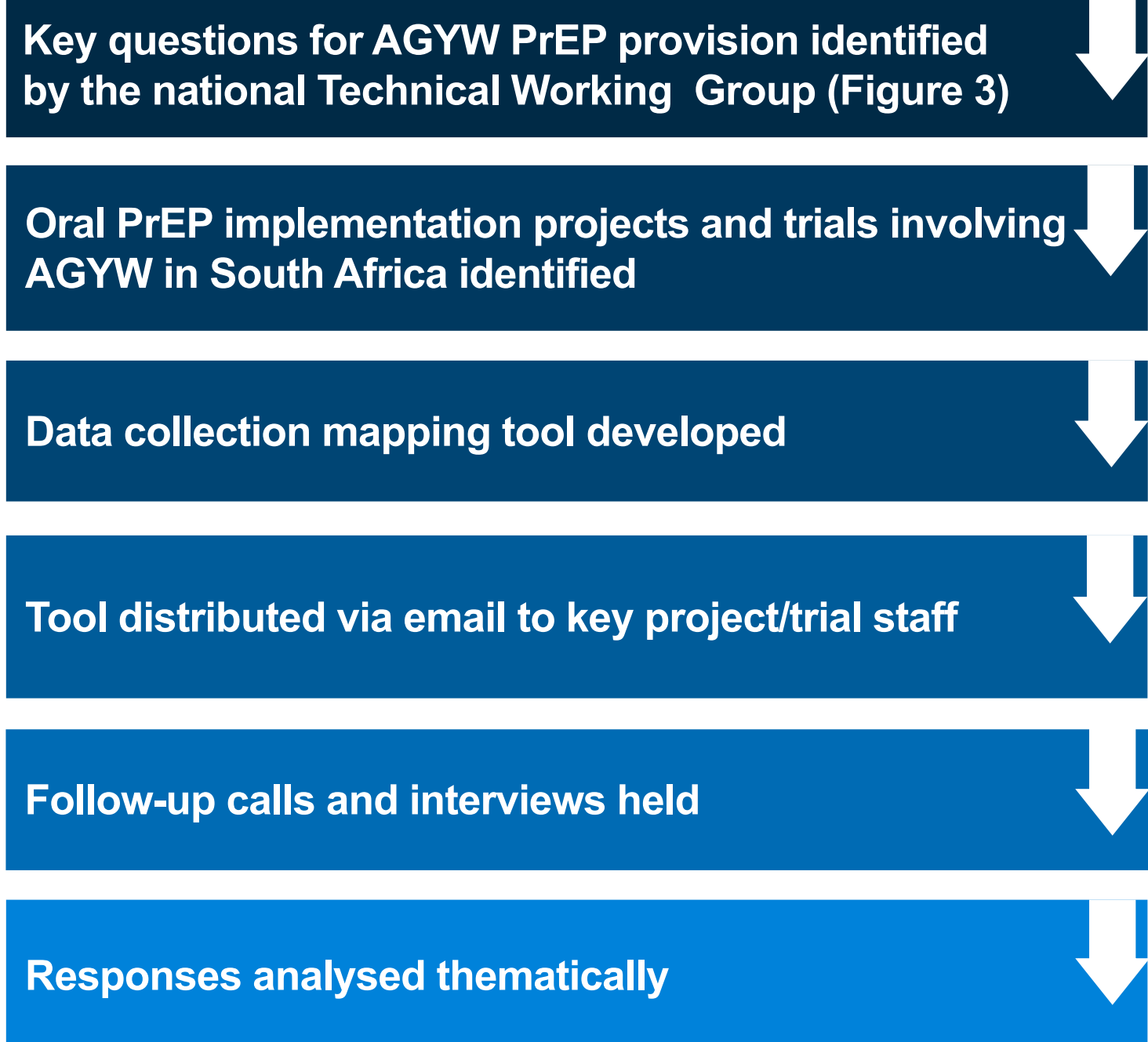


Figure 2: Systematic 6-stage process of mapping research

We identified implementation projects/trials involving AGYW and PrEP and determined which projects were addressing any of the 12 priority questions in Figure 3.

## RESULTS

- At the time of this analysis, there were 13 AGYW PrEP projects being implemented in SA.
- Across the PrEP value chain, there have been significant investments in research on AGYW demand creation, AGYW risk profiling and PrEP adherence.
- In contrast, few projects have provided insights into costing, PrEP cycling and monitoring and evaluation.
- 2016 and 2017 saw the largest investments into PrEP research in SA.

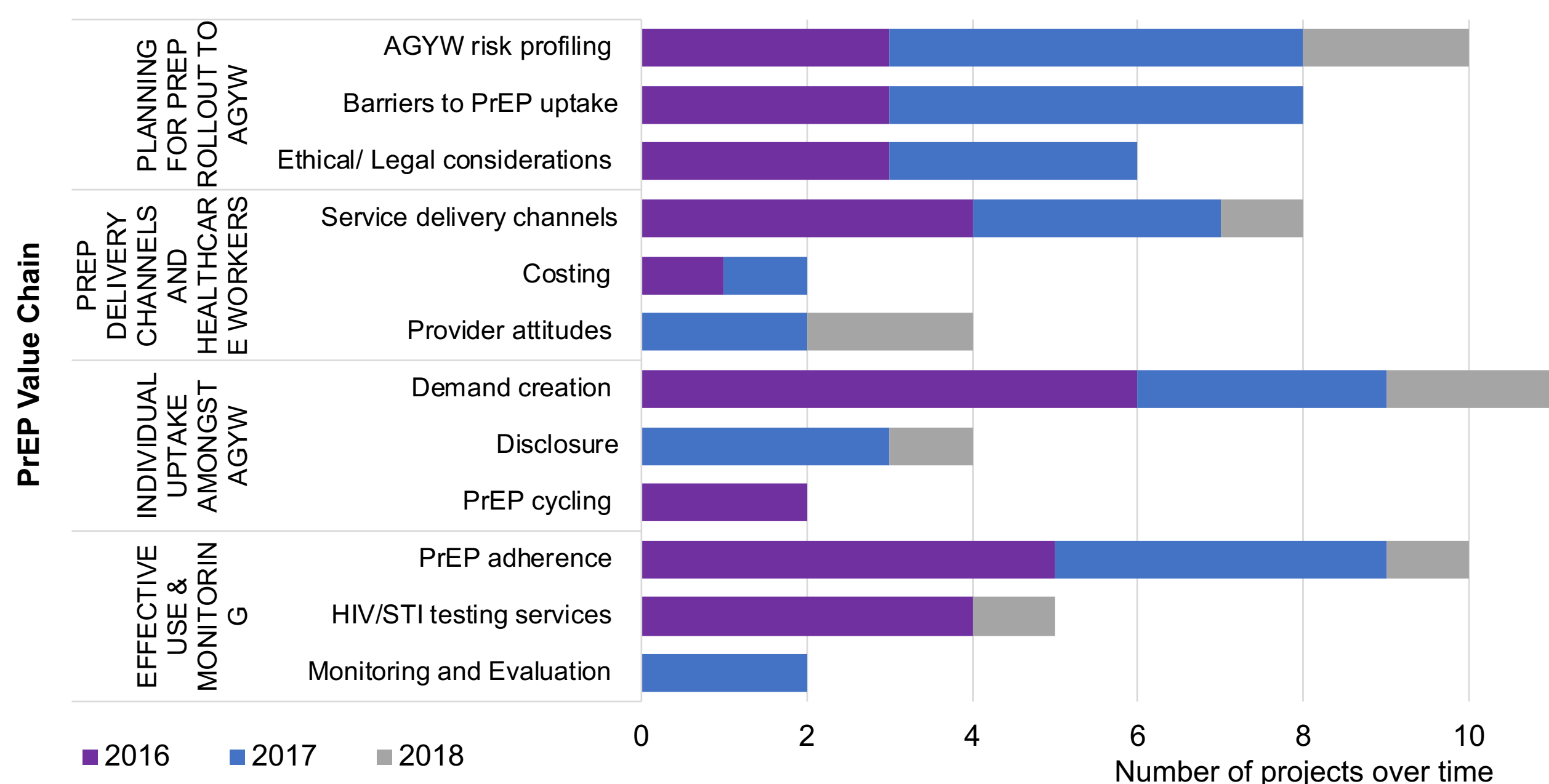


Figure 4. Types of evidence on AGYW PrEP programming being generated by research and demo projects

Key questions were compiled, drawing on different aspects of PrEP provision. A simple 4-category value chain was defined to organize survey questions and findings (Figure 3).

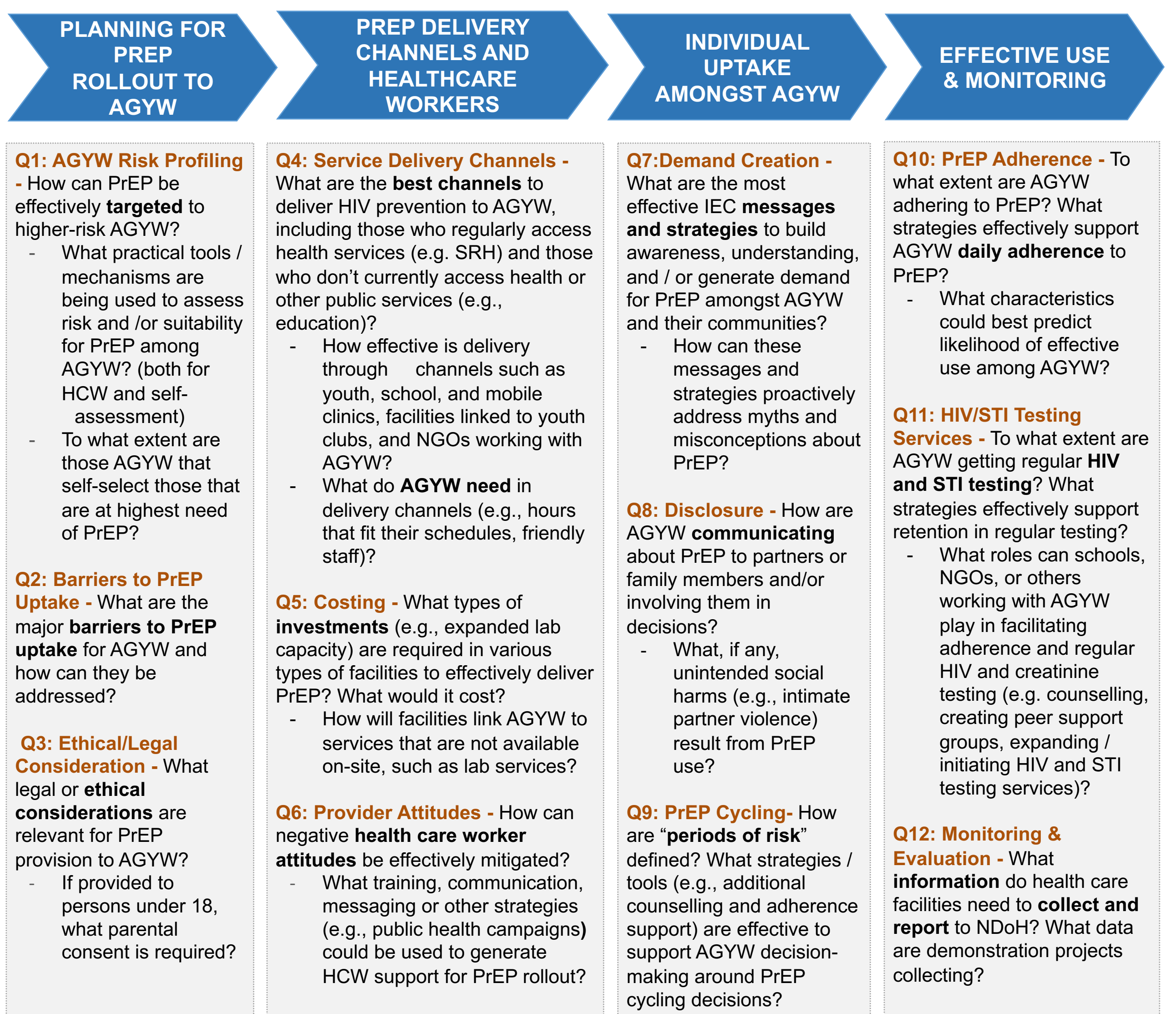


Figure 3: Key questions for AGYW PrEP implementation projects and trials in South Africa

## CONCLUSION

PrEP is now available to AGYW through diverse service delivery platforms: implementing partner clinics, public health facilities, university campus clinics and mobile vans, and there is a multitude of demand creation strategies used to make AGYW aware of PrEP.

SA's PrEP implementation progress has been informed by research translation into programmatic action. This structured process helped the NDOH understand what AGYW PrEP research was underway and use relevant project findings to inform implementation. Through a multitude of projects focusing on service delivery platforms and demand creation strategies, there is a better understanding these aspects relevant to PrEP programming for AGYW. Hence, using a value chain framework approach and defining questions within this framework helps to systematically inform key areas for PrEP research and implementation.



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