Dataflows Info Sheet

Overview

Dataflows provide a **centralized, scalable, and automated** approach to data movement and preparation. They eliminate the inefficiencies of Excel-driven processes and enable trusted, up-to-date insights across teams.

Scalable Analytics for Large Datasets

Prepare and refresh large volumes of data efficiently in the cloud, supporting faster dashboards and complex analysis.

Automated Data Refreshes

Eliminate manual exports. Keep dashboards live with scheduled or incremental refreshes. Deployment schedules can be set for easy maintenance of pipelines & reports.

Data Integration Between Teams

Unify Finance, Product teams, and Marketing analysis under shared datasets with consistent standardized transformations & labeling.

Improved Oversight & Governance

Ensure consistent data processes with auditable, transparent transformations, with multiple roles.

Customized Views Without Extra Work

Because sources are already integrated and data is cleaned at the Dataflow level, creating **customized tables or views** for different stakeholders is easy. Analysts no longer need to build complex Excel LOOKUPs or merge spreadsheets — new views can be created quickly, without complicated mapping.

Key Takeaways From our Current Process

Excel-driven processes are **too slow and fragmented** for the enterprise-level data Elekta manages. Dataflows act as a cloud-optimized extension of Power Query, moving transformation logic into a shared environment that sits above Excel and Power BI.

This enables **cleaning, standardization, and scenario filters** to be defined once and applied across **multiple reports and applications at the same time**. The approach can be scaled to simple recurring dashboards or expanded to large multi-team frameworks.
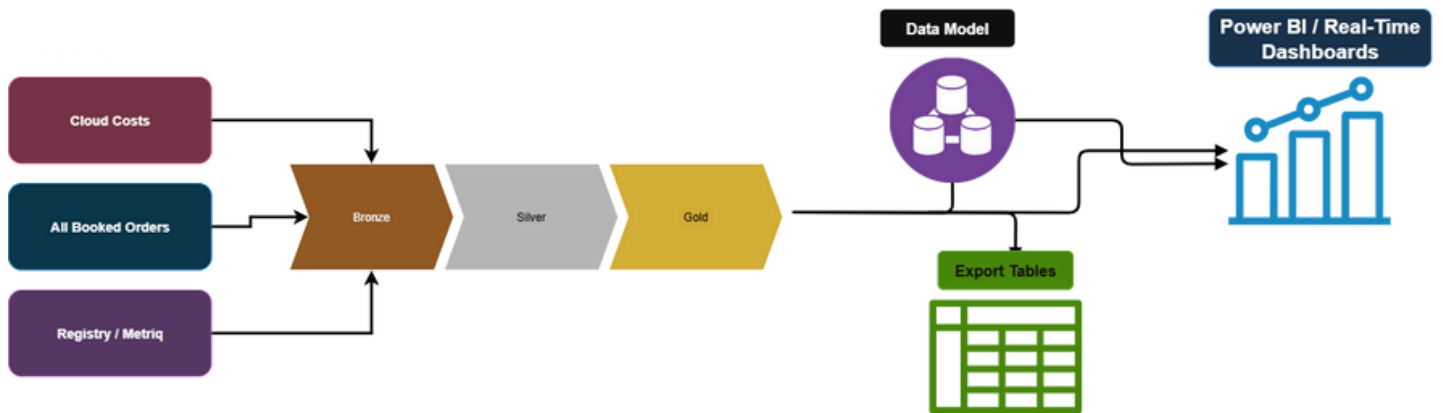
Starting with smaller use cases will show **immediate improvements in data quality, alignment, and reporting efficiency**, while laying the foundation for broader adoption across the enterprise. Looking into Data integration tools which are more advanced than Dataflows would be something worth exploring when we're **comfortable with how our data moves.**

Comparison

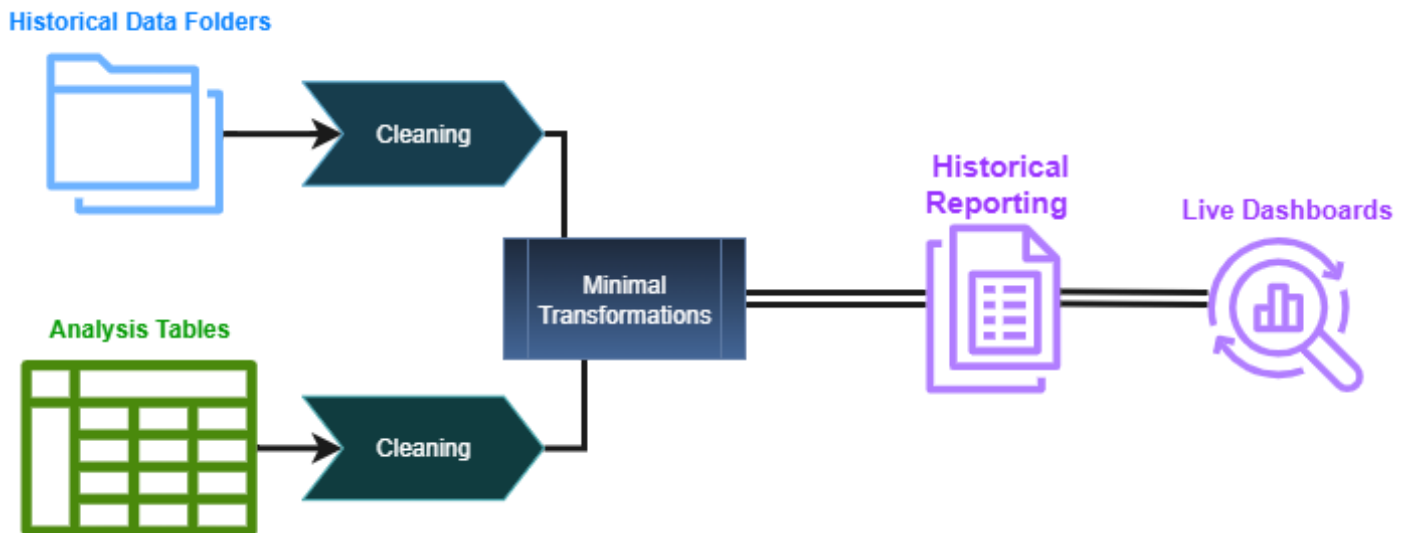| Focus	Excel + Direct Power BI	Dataflows + Power BI
Data Source Handling	Multiple Excel files, often emailed or stored in different locations. High risk of misalignment.	Direct connections to source systems. One source of truth, always up to date.
Refresh / Timeliness	Static snapshots; requires manual re-exports.	Scheduled or incremental refreshes keep data current automatically
Data Cleaning	Cleaning steps repeated in every report .	Cleaning & transformation defined once, reused across reports.
Version Control	Multiple versions of similar looking data cause confusion.	Centralized pipeline ensures consistent data for everyone.
Scalability & Flexibility	Large Excel files slow the pipeline and can lead to crashes when complex.	Cloud-based transformations scale for large datasets, keeping pipelines clean.
Collaboration	Limited User Role framework, and no clear transformation process laid out.	Enforced rules, transparent transformations, trusted dashboards.

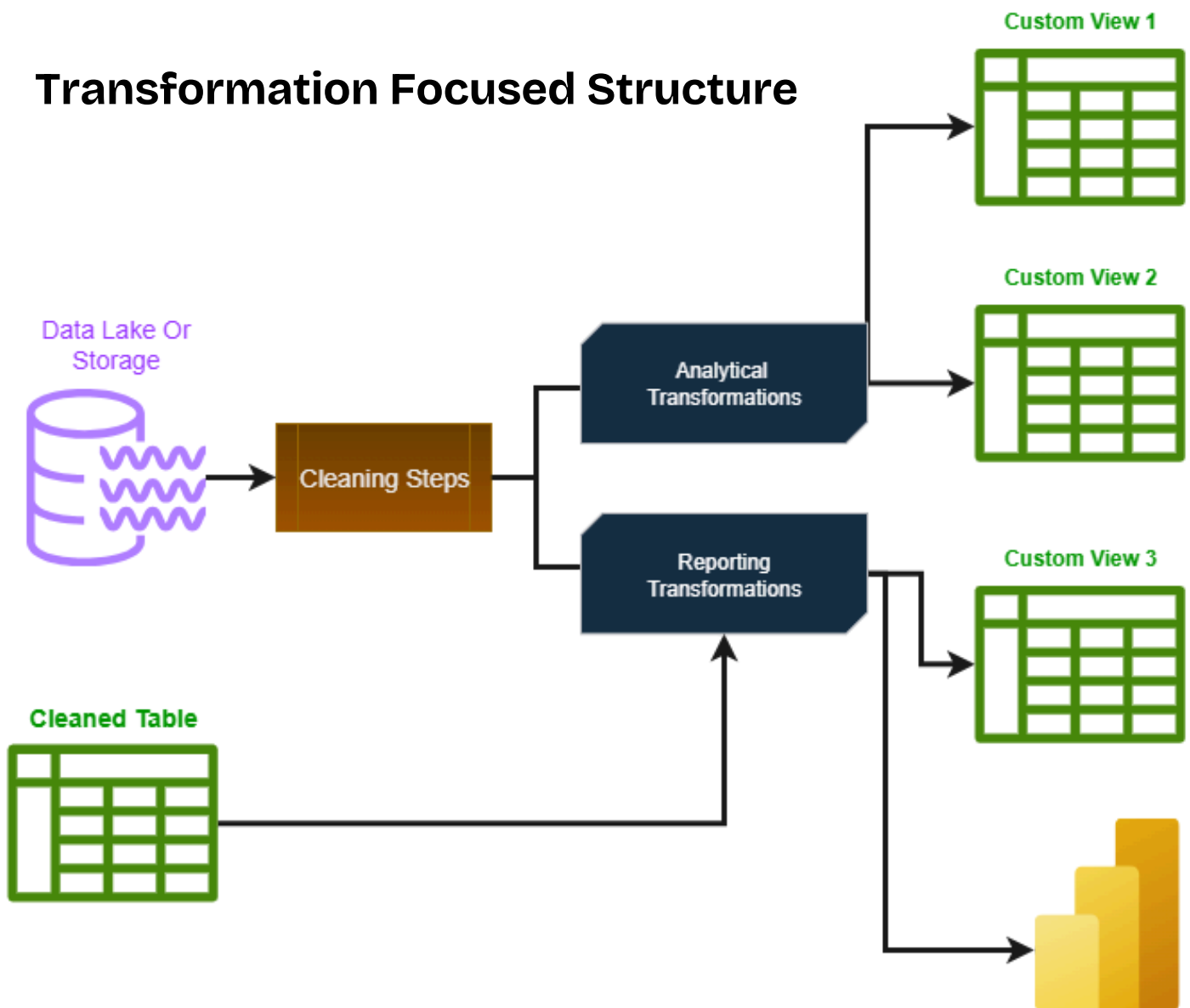# Structure Breakdown

Medallion Process

- Best for: Large datasets, complex transformations, multi-team integration.
- Strengths: Modular, scalable, clear steps for alignment.
- Trade-off: Requires more governance and maintenance.

Ingestion Focused Structure

- Best for: Simple recurring dashboards, smaller datasets, minimal transformations.
- Strengths: Easy setup, fast refresh, minimal maintenance.
- Trade-off: Fewer shared transformations; downstream changes may be necessary for more complexity.

Transformation Focused Structure

- **Best for**: Pipelines with heavy cleaning needs and repeated metrics.
- **Strengths**: One version of truth, no redundant work between views.
- **Trade-off**: Heavier compute at the Dataflow level.

Closing Note

Dataflows are a flexible tool that can operate in the background to strengthen our data pipeline without disrupting how people prefer to work with Excel or Power BI today.

The goal is not to upend familiar workflows but to make them faster, more reliable, and easier to scale. Success will depend on feedback and collaboration as we identify pain points in our current analytics process.

By testing Dataflows on a few real scenarios, we can see where they add value, refine our approach, and build a smoother process for everyone.