

From Heritage to High Tech: IEEE Benelux Life Members Visit TNO Waalsdorp

On 4 November 2025, 30 members of the IEEE Benelux Section Life Member Affinity Group (LMAG) visited TNO's Defence, Safety & Security (DSS) facilities at Waalsdorp, The Netherlands.

TNO DSS develops innovative solutions to enhance societal safety and resilience, working closely with government bodies, industry, and international partners, including NATO. During the afternoon presentations, participants were introduced to ongoing research in radar and sensor systems, antennas, and ultrasonics, illustrating how advanced physics and engineering underpin modern defence, security, and situational awareness capabilities.

The Waalsdorp site has a distinguished history dating back to 1927, when the "Meetgebouw" laboratory of the Dutch Commission for Physical Armament began operations. Early pioneering work in aeroacoustics, radio-frequency systems, underwater acoustics, and radar laid foundations that still influence present-day technologies. Although much early material was lost during World War II, renewed efforts since the 1970s have preserved this heritage.

A highlight of the visit was the guided tour of Museum Waalsdorp, where LMAG members received detailed explanations of historic instruments and prototypes. These exhibits vividly demonstrated the novelty and ingenuity of past developments and their basic operating principles, many of which remain relevant today.

The combination of technical presentations, historical context, and collegial discussion made this visit both informative and inspiring, showing how decades of innovation at Waalsdorp continue to shape modern defence, safety, and security research.

