



# BACKGROUNDEERS

Press Information Bureau  
Government of India

## WAVES 2025

### *Catalysing Growth through Global Participation and Creative Collaboration*

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#### WAVES as a Strategic Platform for the Global Creative Economy

WAVES 2025 — the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit — began with a simple but ambitious idea: to bring together creative voices from around the world into one collaborative space. From 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025, Mumbai's Jio World Convention Centre and Jio World Garden transformed into a dynamic crossroads, where storytellers, technologists, investors, policymakers, and industry leaders came together not merely to exchange ideas, but to forge meaningful partnerships. Conceived as India's first dedicated global convergence platform for media and entertainment, WAVES was designed to move beyond the format of a



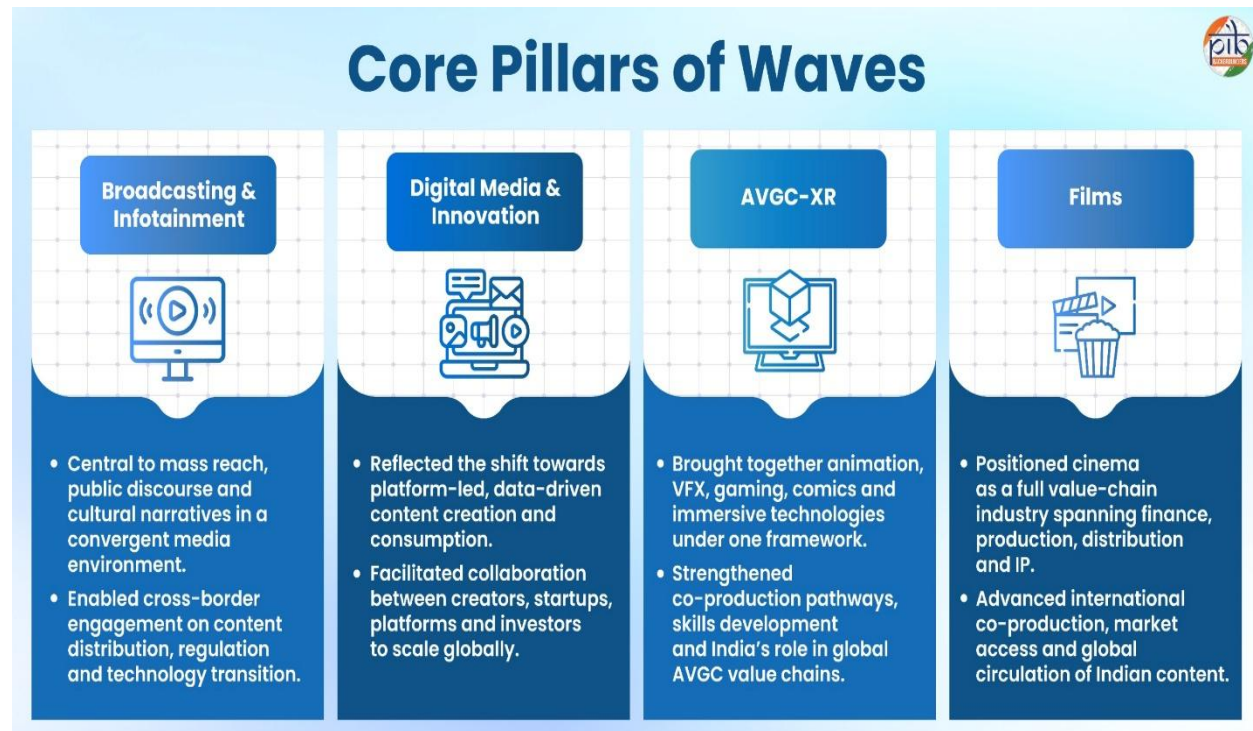
traditional summit and function as a living interface between creators and markets, ideas and institutions.

At a time when creative industries are shaping economies as much as they shape imaginations, WAVES placed collaboration at the centre of its design. The objective was clear: to connect Indian and global creative ecosystems in ways that generate real opportunity — in content creation, creative technology, intellectual property and market access. The scale of participation reflected that ambition. Stakeholders from over 100 countries, including policymakers, global studios, startups, investors and independent creators, engaged across broadcasting, films, digital media, Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) and emerging formats.

More than a one-time gathering, WAVES signalled a shift in how India engages with the global creative economy. Instead of fragmented conversations across sectors and regions, it brought together policy, commerce and creative talent into a single, integrated framework.

## Institutional Architecture and Core Pillars

WAVES was structured around a set of core industry pillars that collectively represent the breadth and future trajectory of the global media and entertainment ecosystem. By bringing these segments onto a single platform, the summit enabled cross-sector interaction, policy alignment and commercial exchange, reflecting the increasingly convergent nature of creative industries worldwide.



## Create in India Challenge

At the heart of WAVES was the Create in India Challenge, a platform built to discover new voices and place them on a global stage. The first season drew nearly one lakh registrations, including over 1,100 international participants from more than 60 countries. The numbers spoke volumes, but the momentum behind them spoke louder. Creators from across continents saw India not merely as a market, but as a dynamic meeting ground where ideas intersect, collaborate, and find new direction.



From this vast pool, 750 finalists were selected to showcase their work at Creatosphere, a curated space within WAVES where emerging talent could engage directly with studios, platforms and decision-makers. Among them were 43 international finalists from over 20 countries, turning the showcase into a genuine exchange of talent and perspectives, rather than a one-directional display.

By linking talent discovery with real industry exposure, the Create in India challenge moved beyond recognition. It created pathways for collaboration, co-creation and cross-border opportunity, reinforcing WAVES as a platform where creative ambition could find global resonance.

## WAVES Bazaar

If Create in India was about discovering voices, WAVES Bazaar was about giving them a marketplace. As the commercial backbone of the Summit, it brought together creators, studios, platforms, broadcasters, distributors and investors across film, television, gaming, music and

immersive media — structured not just for networking, but for real deals and lasting business relationships. Launched ahead of the Summit and designed to operate year-round, it reflected a clear intent: market access should be sustained, institutionalised and globally connected.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Enabled structured buyer–seller engagement, including curated B2B meetings, project pitching and content discovery formats.
- Facilitated over 3,000 B2B meetings, generating business transactions exceeding ₹800 crore, with deal values projected to cross ₹1,000 crore as negotiations progressed beyond the summit.
- The Buyer–Seller Market alone accounted for over ₹500 crore in revenues, reflecting strong commercial traction.
- The Pitch Room shortlisted 16 projects from more than 100 submissions, offering creators direct access to global buyers and investors.
- The Viewing Room showcased 100 films from eight countries, strengthening international visibility and distribution opportunities.
- Enabled concrete cross-border outcomes, including announcements of international co-productions involving Indian and global partners.

The impact of WAVES Bazaar extends far beyond the Summit itself. As a year-round global marketplace, it continues to generate sustained industry engagement and measurable outcomes.



## Culturals and Concerts

Within WAVES, live cultural performances were not merely part of the program- they were shared experiences that sparked connection, celebrated diversity, and brought the spirit of the gathering to life. Across four days in Mumbai, WAVES Culturals & Concerts brought together India's classical, folk and contemporary traditions alongside international artists, turning the stage into a space of shared expression. From orchestral compositions and dance to cross-border collaborations, these performances embodied the spirit of "Connecting Creators, Connecting Countries."

By weaving culture into the Summit's core, WAVES positioned live artistic exchange not merely as a celebration, but as a catalyst for collaboration, creative dialogue and global resonance.

## WaveX (WaveXcelerator)

WaveX infused WAVES with the dynamism of the startup ecosystem. Centered on innovation in media, entertainment, and language technologies, it created a bridge between emerging ventures, government institutions, investors, and global industry leaders- turning ideas into pathways for scale and impact.

At WAVES 2025, over 30 startups pitched live to major players such as Microsoft, Google and Lumikai, while nearly 100 startups showcased their solutions, opening doors to capital and partnerships. Beyond the Summit, WaveX continues to support startups through incubation, mentorship and institutional partnerships with T-Hub, IIT Delhi and a nationwide network of centres — embedding innovation into India's creative ecosystem and linking it to global opportunity.



## Global Media Dialogue

The Global Media Dialogue was a high-level government-to-government initiative held as a centrepiece of the WAVES 2025 in Mumbai. It gave WAVES its institutional depth, bringing governments, regulators and industry leaders onto a shared multilateral platform. It provided space to address the structural shifts reshaping media worldwide — from technology and governance to inclusion and cross-border cooperation.

At its core was the adoption of the WAVES Declaration — a formal, collective commitment by participating nations to strengthen global cooperation in media and entertainment. The Declaration underscored ethical media practices, digital inclusion, cultural diversity and the responsible use of emerging technologies, while encouraging cross-border partnerships and co-productions. By formally anchoring these principles, the Dialogue moved beyond discussion to deliberate alignment, positioning WAVES as a platform where shared vision translates into coordinated action, and global consensus in the creative economy begins to take shape.

### WAVES Declaration

Adopted at the Global Media Dialogue during WAVES 2025 in Mumbai on 2nd May 2025, the WAVES Declaration was endorsed by 77 participating nations, marking a collective commitment to strengthening global cooperation in media and entertainment.

Key commitments and principles:

- Reaffirms the role of media and entertainment in fostering global harmony, cultural understanding and resilience in a post-pandemic, uncertain world.
- Commits to bridging the digital divide by promoting access, affordability and citizen-centric media ecosystems, ensuring equitable participation across communities.
- Emphasises ethical, inclusive and responsible media, including the promotion of diverse voices, public interest content, and fact-based journalism.
- Recognises media and entertainment as engines of inclusive growth and employment, with a focus on youth, women and underrepresented groups.
- Supports fair and open markets, protection of intellectual property, and cross-border partnerships, including co-productions, trade and joint funding models.
- Affirms the responsible and ethical use of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, guided by transparency, accountability and inclusivity.
- Calls for strengthened cooperation to counter misinformation and disinformation, while upholding human rights and cultural sensitivities.
- Reiterates commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, linking creative industries to long-term peace, progress and prosperity.

## Strategic Direction: A Blueprint for India's Creative Economy

Beyond the stages and marketplaces, the conference track of WAVES 2025 posed a deeper question: what kind of creative future is India shaping? Framed as a "Blueprint for a Creative India," the conversations moved past celebration to strategy- recasting media and entertainment not simply as cultural expressions, but as engines of economic growth, capable of expanding exports, generating employment, and amplifying India's cultural voice on the global stage.

The conversations recognised creators and startups not as peripheral participants, but as economic actors shaping new markets. From the rapid expansion of India's creator economy to the integration of AVGC-XR into mainstream media, advertising and immersive storytelling, the message was clear: creativity today is inseparable from technology, entrepreneurship and global ambition. Embedding innovation within education systems, incubation networks and policy frameworks emerged as a shared priority, reinforcing the idea that creative industries are not just niche domains but export-ready, future-facing sectors.

## Participation, Outcomes, and Industry Impact

### Scale and Global Participation

WAVES 2025 unfolded at a scale that signalled serious global intent. Representatives from over 100 countries came together in Mumbai, spanning policymakers, industry leaders, creators, startups and enterprises across broadcasting, digital media, AVGC-XR, films and allied sectors.

More than one lakh people engaged with the Summit. Among them were over 10,000 delegates, 1,000 creators, more than 300 companies and 350 startups. The significance lay not only in the scale, but in the composition. Decision-makers, innovators and storytellers shared the same space, turning WAVES into a meeting point for creative ideas, investment and international collaboration within the creative economy.

### Policy and Institutional Outcomes

At the policy level, the Global Media Dialogue provided a formal multilateral platform for engagement among governments and institutions. 77 countries participated in the Dialogue, culminating in the adoption of the WAVES Declaration, which articulated shared commitments on ethical media practices, digital inclusion, cultural diversity and international cooperation.

This outcome elevated WAVES beyond just a consultative exchange, positioning it as a forum capable of producing collective frameworks and reinforcing India's role as a convener in global media and cultural governance.

### Creators, Talent and CreatoSphere Outcomes

The Create in India Challenges turned talent discovery into access. What began as entries across 33 categories grew into a global creative exchange, drawing participants from India

and more than 60 countries. The scale reflected not just interest, but confidence in India as a shared stage.

For over 750 finalists, CreaSphere became more than a showcase. It was a point of entry into global networks. Across eight creative zones, creators connected with studios, platforms and collaborators. The WAVES Creator Awards recognised more than 150 of them, but the lasting outcome was structural. A pathway now exists for emerging talent to move from recognition to real opportunity within the global creative economy.

### **Startup Innovation and WaveX Engagement**

For the over 200 startups that engaged on the WaveX platform, participation translated into progression. Live pitches by more than 30 ventures and exhibition showcases by nearly 100 did not end on stage. They led to investor follow-ups, partnership discussions and structured entry points into larger industry networks.

Several founders converted these interactions into tangible next steps — refining product strategy, securing mentorship commitments, initiating pilot conversations and exploring funding pathways. The platform reduced the distance between innovation and market. WaveX did not simply convene startups; it helped convert exposure into execution.

### **Market Platforms and Industry Integration**

Through WAVES Bazaar, commercial conversations translated into active deal-making. Structured buyer-seller meetings and curated rights discussions enabled creators and enterprises to move projects into negotiation stages, initiate co-production talks and formalise distribution pathways across film, television, music, animation and digital media.

For participating companies, the platform reduced friction between pitch and partnership. Discussions matured into commercial alignments, content licensing explorations and cross-border collaborations. WAVES Bazaar did not simply connect markets. It accelerated entry into them, strengthening India's positioning within global creative value chains through tangible commercial movement.

### **Institutional Capacity Building and Ecosystem Support**

WAVES 2025 signalled a shift toward long-term capacity building in the creative economy. The positioning of IICT as the National Centre of Excellence for AVGC-XR reflected a clear institutional commitment to strengthening advanced skills and production capabilities in emerging creative technologies. In the months that followed, this direction was reinforced by the announcement of AVGC Content Creator Labs across 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges, aimed at building a workforce of two million professionals by 2030.

Together, these steps suggest that the vision articulated at WAVES is translating into structural expansion, strengthening the talent pipeline needed for India's creative industries to scale globally.

## Conclusion: From Convening Power to Enduring Capability

WAVES 2025 highlighted a pivotal moment for India. The creative economy has moved from the sidelines to the center of growth and diplomacy. It is now a key driver of how nations connect, compete, and collaborate. The Summit showcased not just scale, but confidence. Creators expressed global ambition, startups unveiled solutions for international markets, and policymakers engaged with the understanding that culture, technology, and commerce are increasingly intertwined.

The impact of WAVES lies in the bridges it has begun to build. Between independent storytellers and global studios. Between early-stage founders and institutional capital. Between governments navigating common technological shifts. These were not symbolic gestures. They were working relationships taking shape in real time.

Perhaps the most meaningful outcome is continuity. Networks remain. Partnerships progress. Young creators return home with global contacts. Startups refine products with sharper direction. Institutions carry forward shared frameworks. In this way, WAVES shifts from being an event to becoming infrastructure.

If sustained with care, this platform has the potential to deepen India's presence in global creative value chains not through assertion, but through participation and partnership. The future of the creative economy will be shaped by those who can combine imagination with organisation. WAVES suggests that India intends to do both.

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