



# India's Orange Economy

## Role of Indian Institute of Creative Technologies

*If we want to build a creative nation, we must begin early. Creativity is not a switch that turns on at 18; it is a muscle strengthened through exposure, practice, and mentorship from a young age. By placing AVGC content creator labs in secondary schools, we are signalling to students that creativity is not extracurricular; it is core.*

**I**ndia is poised to lead the global Orange Economy at a time when its youth stand at a critical crossroads of cultural expression and economic opportunity. With the Union Budget announcement by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to support the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), Mumbai, in establishing Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) content creator labs across 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges, the Government of India has taken a decisive step to fuse creativity with technology at a national scale.

This is not merely a budgetary provision but a declaration of intent that India will no longer be just a

consumer or a back-end support for creative services; we are preparing to become a global leader in content creation.

The AVGC sector is at an inflection point worldwide. Animation powers cinema and streaming. Visual effects are integral to advertising, education, and immersive experiences. Gaming has evolved from entertainment to a serious driver of innovation, storytelling, and community. Comics now anchor transmedia franchises that span films, games, merchandise, and education. Add extended reality (XR), artificial intelligence, and real-time engines to this mix, and you have an industry that is reshaping how humans learn, play, communicate, and imagine.



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Globally, the creative economy contributes trillions of dollars in annual revenues and employs millions across value chains that combine artistic expression with technological capability. India's own media and entertainment sector has witnessed consistent growth over the past decade, supported by rising digital consumption, affordable data access, and expanding OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms. The AVGC segment within this broader ecosystem has emerged as one of the fastest-growing components, with increasing demand for skilled artists, technical directors, game designers, pipeline engineers, and immersive media specialists. Industry estimates suggest that India's AVGC industry will require nearly two million professionals by 2030. This announcement comes at a time when the youth of the country are ready to take a leap; what they need is structured training that is accessible, high-quality, inclusive, and aligned with future industry needs.

The government's decision to anchor this national effort through IICT is both humbling and energising. IICT was envisioned as India's first institution dedicated exclusively to creative technology, on the lines of the IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) and IIMs (Indian Institute of Management), where art, design, storytelling, computer science, and business intersect. The support to expand AVGC creator labs into thousands of schools and hundreds of colleges transforms that vision into a people's movement.

IICT's establishment marks an important shift in how India views creative education. Traditionally, creative disciplines have been treated as niche or supplementary streams. By institutionalising creative technologies within a national framework, the country

acknowledges that design, animation, gaming, and digital storytelling are not peripheral pursuits but core economic drivers. The first IICT campus, launched in July 2025 at the National Film Development Corporation's Peddar Road premises in Mumbai, was conceived as a state-of-the-art facility that mirrors professional production environments. Equipped with advanced animation and gaming laboratories, immersive XR studios, post-production suites, and screening facilities, the campus provides students with exposure to real-world tools and workflows from the outset.

The institute introduced eighteen industry-aligned courses spanning animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, post-production, and extended reality. These programmes were developed in consultation with industry practitioners to ensure that graduates are job-ready and capable of contributing meaningfully to domestic and global studios. In addition to long-duration programmes, IICT has launched short-term courses integrating artificial intelligence into creative workflows, recognising that AI-assisted production, real-time rendering, and procedural generation are rapidly transforming industry pipelines.

Within its first phase, IICT has also initiated an incubation ecosystem to support start-ups emerging from the AVGC-XR domain. Early-stage ventures in gaming, digital art, immersive experiences, and interactive media have begun to receive mentorship, infrastructure access, and industry exposure through the institute. This incubation dimension is critical because the Orange Economy thrives not only on skilled employment but also on intellectual property creation and entrepreneurial innovation.

If we want to build a creative nation, we must begin early. Creativity is not a switch that turns on at 18; it is a muscle strengthened through exposure, practice, and mentorship from a young age. By placing AVGC content creator labs in secondary schools, we are signalling to students that creativity is not extracurricular; it is core.

These labs will not be about passive consumption of technology. They will be active spaces where students learn to draw, animate, design characters, build simple games, and tell stories rooted in their own communities. A student in a small town can bring local folklore to life through animation. A teenager with an interest in mathematics can discover game physics. A child who struggles with conventional examinations might find confidence and purpose in visual storytelling.

**Orange Economy: Boosting India's AVGC Sector**

- India's AVGC sector is projected to require 2 million professionals by 2030
- Budget proposes to support the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies, Mumbai in setting up AVGC Content Creator Labs in 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges



This approach aligns with broader educational reforms that emphasise experiential learning, multidisciplinary integration, and digital literacy. AVGC labs in schools can strengthen cognitive development, collaborative problem-solving, and computational thinking. Exposure to creative tools also nurtures confidence and self-expression, especially among students who may not excel in conventional academic frameworks but demonstrate exceptional artistic or narrative abilities. This is how we democratise opportunity. Talent is evenly distributed across India; access is not. AVGC labs in schools help bridge that gap.

The inclusion of 500 colleges in this initiative is equally critical. Colleges are where foundational exposure becomes professional capability. With well-designed AVGC labs, colleges can evolve into regional innovation engines, producing not only skilled graduates but also start-ups, intellectual property, and new forms of cultural expression.

At the collegiate level, interdisciplinary collaboration becomes particularly powerful. A computer science student can collaborate with a fine arts student. A literature major can work with a game designer. An engineering student can prototype XR solutions for healthcare or education. This cross-pollination is where some of the most meaningful breakthroughs occur. Creative technology is inherently interdisciplinary; it demands narrative sensitivity, technical precision, and entrepreneurial thinking in equal measure.

IICT's broader roadmap includes the development of a permanent campus within Mumbai's Film City,

designed as an integrated creative-tech hub with research centres, innovation labs, and collaborative production environments. Such a campus would embed students within India's media production ecosystem, enabling continuous engagement with studios, filmmakers, digital platforms, and gaming companies. This proximity strengthens industry-academia integration and accelerates skill translation into employability.

Industry collaboration remains central to IICT's growth. Partnerships with leading technology companies, digital platforms, and creative enterprises ensure that curriculum frameworks remain aligned with evolving global standards. Exposure to global best practices, masterclasses by industry professionals, and structured internship pathways strengthen the employability of graduates. In an industry defined by rapid technological shifts, sustained collaboration is not optional; it is essential.

Research and development in emerging technologies form another pillar of IICT's long-term strategy. Areas such as AI-assisted animation, real-time rendering engines, motion capture optimisation, immersive simulation, and virtual production pipelines represent the future of global media production. By investing in research capabilities, IICT seeks to position India not merely as a skilled workforce provider but as an innovation contributor in the global AVGC ecosystem.

Entrepreneurship and intellectual property creation are equally important. The Orange Economy generates long-term value when creators retain ownership of their stories, characters, and digital assets.

Through incubation support, mentorship networks, and connections to investors and distribution platforms, IICT aims to nurture original Indian IP that can travel globally. This is particularly significant in a country rich with mythological narratives, regional folklore, contemporary urban stories, and diverse artistic traditions that remain underrepresented in global media landscapes.

At IICT, we are seeing firsthand how industry-driven curricula, combined with real-world experiences, dramatically improve employability and entrepreneurial outcomes. The first campus, launched at the National Film Development Corporation's Peddar Road premises in July 2025, offering 18 industry-aligned courses in the AVGC-XR sector, is already demonstrating the appetite for such education. Student enrolment trends, industry engagement, and incubation interest indicate strong demand for structured creative-tech pathways. Scaling this ethos nationally is the natural next step, and we are thankful to the government for pushing us in the right direction.

The Orange Economy represents more than economic growth; it represents cultural confidence. As India advances towards becoming a five-trillion-

dollar economy and beyond, the integration of creativity, culture, and digital technology will define its global narrative presence. The AVGC initiative anchored through IICT is a strategic investment in that future. By combining institutional excellence, early-stage exposure, interdisciplinary collaboration, and entrepreneurial support, India is building the foundations of a sustainable creative ecosystem.

The journey ahead will require careful implementation, quality assurance, and continuous skill upgradation. Infrastructure must be matched by faculty development, curriculum standardisation, and industry feedback mechanisms. However, the direction is clear. With structured support, visionary policy, and institutional leadership, India's youth can transform cultural imagination into economic strength.

The Orange Economy is not a peripheral sector; it is central to the aspirations of a young nation that communicates, learns, and creates in digital spaces. Through IICT and the nationwide AVGC lab initiative, India is laying the groundwork for a generation of creators who will shape not only entertainment but also education, innovation, and cultural diplomacy. □

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