

Metabox HD Combo CI

First HD receiver for DVB-S, DVB-S2 and DVB-T

At TELE-satellite we're always delighted when companies wander off the beaten track and introduce products that have not been available in the marketplace before. The Metabox HD Combo CI of Korean manufacturer Metamultimedia is such an innovation. As the 'Combo' in its model name suggests, this box brings together two different reception modes: DVB-S/DVB-S2 and DVB-T.



And this is also why the back panel features a terrestrial antenna jack complete with loop-through output next to the usual IF input and output for satellite signals. Added to that are two scart euroconnectors, a total of six RCA jacks for composite video, stereo audio and YUV, as well as an optical digital audio output. The HDMI interface that is also located on the back panel makes sure digital video and audio are transmitted free of loss.

There is also an interface labelled E-SATA. It had not been activated on our test unit, but Metamultimedia is working on activating this function, which will then convert HD Combo CI into a full PVR.

Software updates and new channel lists can be loaded into the memory by the contemporary way by simply plug-

ging in a USB stick with the required files on the front panel. Speaking of the front panel, it features an easy-to-read VFD display as well as eight buttons for operating the receiver without using the remote control.

An unimposing flap on the right side of the front panel hides two CI slots and the USB interface for updates.

Of course the receiver comes with a remote control which sits pleasantly in your hand and boasts clearly labelled buttons which can be reached quite easily and have a nice feel to them.

Everyday use

Turn on the Metabox HD Combo CI for the first time and it quickly will ask you to select your desired OSD language. English, German, French, Portu-

guese, Spanish, Turkish, Italian and Farsi are available. Once the receiver knows how to communicate with you it swiftly moves you to the main menu which cannot be left until a channel scan has been performed.

At this point we also have to say that we cannot praise Metamultimedia highly enough for devising such a great looking and easy to use on-screen menu layout. From both an optical and an ergonomical point of view it is right up with the best and allows setting up the receiver in a self-explanatory way.

In the Installation sub-menu we first have to decide which of the two tuners has to be configured. Choosing DVB-S/DVB-S2 a list of 57 pre-stored satellites is made available, and the Metabox has no issues with addressing more than one satellite positions as it features DiSEqC 1.0 for up to four stationary LNBs and

DiSEqC 1.2 and/or 1.2 (USALS) for rotating antennas. The only protocol missing is DiSEqC 1.1, which means owners of large multi-feed antennas are left in the rain for the time being.

There are pre-programmed settings for several types of LNBs which means almost any reception equipment will be set up and working with this box in next to no time. Should you require more exotic frequency settings you can always enter these manually.

Beginners will be particularly impressed with this receiver's automatic DiSEqC detection feature. Using it, all you have to do is mark the required satellite positions on the list and let the box look for the appropriate DiSEqC settings based on the pre-stored transponder list.

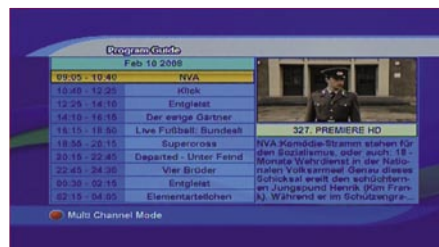
Both satellite and transponder data can be edited in a dedi-



Clearly arranged info bar |



EPG (multi channel) |



EPG (single channel) |



cated sub-menu at any time and without a lot of hassle. Contrary to many other manufacturers Metamultimedia offers a cleverly designed solution for that even below the surface, when you go into more detail.

The Metabox boasts a 10,000-channel memory which can be filled using either an automatic or a manual signal scan. Owners of dishes with a DiSEqC motor installed will particularly appreciate that up to ten satellite positions can be marked before the actual scan begins. This is a feature that can save a lot of time if you have a rotating dish.

Our scan on a 90-transponder satellite took a little over six minutes, which does not break any Olympic record but compares favourably to many competing receivers.

Looking for digital terrestrial channels requires even less patience and expertise. Simply choose whether you want to perform an automatic or a manual scan and that's it. An automatic scan will check the UHF frequency band that has been defined prior to starting the scan. If the attached terrestrial antenna has a built-in amplifier the receiver can be set to provide a 5-Volt power supply directly over the signal cable.

In order to organise the usual chaos that prevails after an initial scan the Metabox HD Combo CI offers a whole range of sort-

ing and editing functions, such as sorting the channels according to alphabet, satellite, transponder, encryption system, child lock or S-ID.

To make sure all channels you watch frequently can be found at the touch of a button at a later stage, you should move them to one of five favourite lists which can be freely defined by the user.

User preferences are dealt with in the second major menu item. It is here that you can instruct the box to set the current time based on information from DVB-S or DVB-T data streams, and you can set up to eight timer entries with the option of timer actions being repeated daily.

The HDMI interface of the Metabox can provide video signals in 576p, 720p and 1080i using the PAL colour system, while the scart euroconnectors can be set to deliver RGB, CVBS or S-Video signals.

Once all initial settings are made and the channel list is filled with all the offerings of digital satellite and terrestrial television and radio, you're free to leave the main menu so that the receiver switches to the first channel on the list.

Whenever a new channel appears on screen a clearly arranged info bar is inserted on the bottom of the screen. It

presents information on the current program as well as status icons referring to teletext, subtitles, encryption, Dolby Digital audio, child lock or HD contents, among other things.

If you press the Info button for a second time extended EPG information on the current program is made available, if this is transmitted by the channel provider.

While we're at it, the EPG of the Metabox stands out with its clever design and great functionality. You can either call up details for each single channel or an overview of five channels at a time. If you press the OK button the channel list is displayed as expected, but even here Metamultimedia has gone beyond the conventional and offers a virtual keyboard which pops up when you press the green button on the remote. Simply key in the name of a

channel you're looking for and the box will call up this particular channel if it's in the overall channel list. Of course you can also temporarily sort channels according to various parameters so that you will easily find whatever you're looking for.

The time it takes the HD Combo CI to switch from one channel to the next is a little more than one second, which we feel is fine. It's only when switching to HD channels that the box may take a moment or two before moving on.

Usability of the Metabox HD Combo CI is brilliant with all the features already mentioned above. But there are even more nice little amenities that add up to move this receiver right to the best of the pack: NVOD support, language and subtitle selection or multi-picture mode for displaying up to 16 channels at the same time.

Metamultimedia ships its receiver with a low threshold tuner which will lock and process signals with a C/N as low as 5 db. SCPC compatibility for DVB-S is specified for 1~45 Ms/s, but our tests could not quite confirm this. Even though, every SCPC signal with 1.6 Ms/s or above will work, which in itself is more than your average satellite box is capable of.

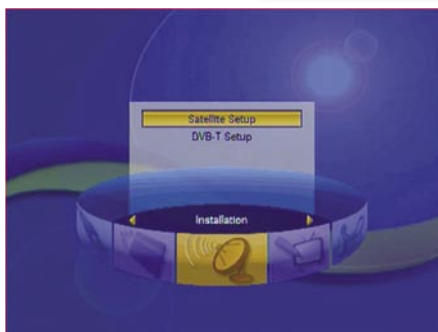
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SCPC reception with the Metabox HD Combo CI



Main menu |



Antenna settings |

Software updates are available at regular intervals as the manufacturer is striving to constantly improve its products.

Updates can be installed over the air if your satellite dish points to ASTRA 19.2° East or by using a USB stick.

Expert opinion

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The Metabox HD Combo CI is a dedicated receiver for the whole family which shines thanks to its ease of use and sophisticated features. It comes in an elegant case that will add a finishing touch to any living room multimedia rack.

With a combination of DVB-S, DVB-S2 and DVB-T the manufacturer tries to leave the beaten track and in our opinion succeeds in creating a clever innovation which is particularly useful considering the fact that local channels are mostly available only on terrestrial TV.

Thanks to this receiver it is finally possible to receive local terrestrial channels as well as HDTV satellite channels using the same box.

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none



Thomas Haring
TELE-satellite
Test Center
Austria

TECHNIC DATA

Manufacturer	Metamultimedia Co. Ltd., South Korea
Fax	+82 2 6300 4112
E-Mail	master@metamultimedia.net
Model	Metabox HD Combo CI
Funktion	HDTV receiver for DVB-S, DVB-S2 and DVB-T
Channel memory	10000
Symbolrate DVB-S	1~45 Ms/s
SCPC compatible	yes (> 1.6 Ms/s)
USALS	yes
DiSEqC	1.0 / 1.2 / 1.3
Scart euroconnectors	2
Audio/Video outputs	3 x RCA + 3x RCA YUV
UHF Modulator	no
S-Video	yes
Component video output	yes
HDMI	yes
0/12 Volt connection	no
Digital Audio output	yes
EPG	yes
C/Ku Band compatible	yes

