with ELETTRA, **Operational** Experience C.J. BOCCHETTA, Sincrotrone Trieste - The characteristics of the Italian 3rd. generation synchrotron radiation laboratory **ELETTRA** give users unprecedented opportunities for scientific research. ELETTRA early in its commissioning phase exceeded its design goals to provide the community with one of the world's brightest sources of VUV and soft X-ray radiation. The source brilliance and lifetime are the figures of merit for a high output of successful user experiments. A survey is given of the control and optimisation of the many Machine parameters that ultimately influence these figures. Of equal importance an overview is also given of the continued efforts being made to exceed the original goals and increase not only the brilliance and lifetime but also reliability and flexibility of use. Finally a status of the machine performance will be presented.