

## TOURISM AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT. STUDY CASE: BĂILE FELIX-BĂILE 1 MAI TOURISM SYSTEM, BIHOR COUNTY, ROMANIA

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**Abstract :** The study presented has the purpose of highlighting the role and importance of tourism in the development of the local economy of the touristic system Băile Felix – Băile 1 Mai, Bihor County, Romania. This fact is concluded from the results of several analyses and correlations between the following factors : the numbers of companies, employees, fiscal value and recorded profit between the years 2000-2014.

**Key words:** tourism, local development, companies, employees, fiscal value

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most dynamic economic sectors with durable development responsible for the local economy is tourism (Drăghici et al., 2015; Dumitru, 2007; Herman et al., 2017; Ilie et al., 2017). An important part of it is represented by curative and recreational tourism. Optimal conditions for the appearance and development of such activity have been met in the tourist system Băile Felix - Băile 1 Mai (Ilieș et al., 2011, 2013). A big role in this was played by the existence of

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curative natural factors such as geothermal water, mud and the climate. Explored since older times (Borovic and Markovic, 2015), geothermal water is an important factor in touristic motivation, being a source of health and well being (Kapczynski and Szromek, 2008; Joppe, 2010; Kosic et al., 2011). Alike thermal water, the beneficial effects of therapeutic mud have been known and used from the oldest times (De Vos, 2010, Khiari, 2014). The mud used in the curative therapy is "extracted from Băile 1 Mai, has the consistency of natural paste, care which was born from long geologic and biologic processes, from the mixture with water of organic and inorganic insoluble microparticles" (Munteanu et al., 1979, p. 43). "Climate is one of the geophysical elements that make up geographical space, contributing to the environmental conditions that facilitate or hinder human settlement. People seek to settle in those spaces that offer the greatest comfort and possibilities of survival in terms of climate. Tourism, as a human activity, is also governed by these same imperatives. Therefore, climate is an important criterion for locating tourism centers, helping to determine how an area is to be used" (Martin, 2005, p. 573).

The local curative factors are beneficial "for treating a wide range of health conditions: "inflammatory rheumatic disease rheumatoid arthritis, rheumatic diseases degenerative cervical, dorsal and lumbar spondylosis, polyarthroses; post-traumatic post-traumatic post-traumatic joint disorders, post-operative posture in joints, bones, fractures, sprains, sprains; central and peripheral hemiparesis neurological disorders at least 6 months after occurrence, parapareze at least 3 months after myelitis, after surgery on the marrow, after vertebral trauma, various paresis and paralysis; chronic gynecological chronic underlying conditions, minor puberty or menopause disorders; associated diseases metabolic and nutritional diseases, type II diabetes, endocrine diseases, gout with localized joints", using the following procedures: "diadinamic and interferential currents; magnetodiaflux; ultrasound; ultrasounds; ionization; aerosols; thermotherapy; therapeutic baths with thermal mineral water in bathtubs and pools; galvanic baths; underwater shower; manual segmental massage; physical therapy at the gym".<sup>1</sup>

Based on this, the role of the study of the importance of tourism in the development of economy is mandatory, for durable development of the Bihor society, the obtained results being used by public authorities, local population, tourist service providers, tour operators, tourists etc.

The local economy is tied to the concept of local development which also means the development of the society starting from what is specific to the area. They are defined, among others, by the natural setting, which had a big role in the shaping of the local socio-economic system (Pires et al., 2015; Bercu, 2015; Kisman and Tasar, 2014; Rogerson, 2015; Lu et al., 2016; Boccella et al., 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tratamentbalnear.ro/baile-1-mai>

The touristic system Băile Felix - Băile 1 Mai is located in Sânmartin, Bihor County, "in the west part of Romania, right near Romania's state border with Hungary, at the contact between the morphological units of Tisa Plain (subunit of the Western Plain) with the Carpathian Mountains (The Occidental Carpathians), in the hydrographic basin of the Tisa River, tributary on the left of the Danube River" (Herman et al., 2017, p. 266 - 267) (figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Spațial location of the Felix - 1 Mai spa tourist system

"From the tourism point of view, the valorization of specific resources in this area dates back to the XV-XVII centuries when around the localities Băile 1 Mai and Băile Felix it began the exploitation for curative purposes of the mineral waters and vegetable slime extracted from the lake in the locality" (Herman et al., 2017, p. 267).

The appearance and development of tourism in the area of the touristic system Băile Felix – Băile 1 Mai, which "includes all objects, processes and facts related to the tourist activity of Băile Felix, 1 Mai-Haieș, Sânmartin, Cordau and Rontau within its structure" was a slow process, of long continuance, whose evolution is far from being over (Herman and Tătar, 2015, p. 116). Sitting at the base of this evolutionary process is a series of positive aspects, that have to do with the natural and anthropic setting. Thus, this is the context that the study imposes, having as purpose the highlighting of the relationship between specific aspects of curative and recreational tourism and the local economy.

## WORK METHODOLOGY

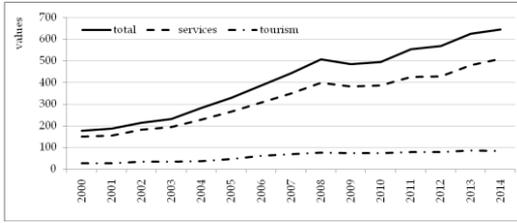
To highlight the role tourism has in the development of the local economy, several bibliographic and field researches have been made, followed by analysis and correlations between the number of companies, employees, fiscal value and profit recorded between the years 2000-2014, regarding the touristic system of Băile Felix – Băile 1 Mai, Bihor County, Romania (Drăghici et al., 2015; Herman et al., 2017; Ilie et al., 2017; Pintilii et al. 2014; Stoian et al. 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

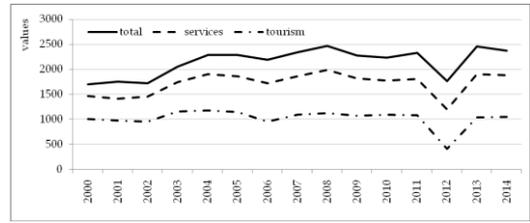
Evolution of the number of companies, employees, fiscal value and profit, at the level of the tourism system Băile Felix - Băile 1 Mai, between 2000 and 2014, saw an upward trend (marked by some oscillations specific to 2010, 2012), each indicator analyzed, recording significant increases as follows: the number of companies increased from 177 firms in 2000 to 646 firms in 2014; the number of employees increased from 1711 employees in 2000 to 2375 employees in 2014; the fiscal value increased from RON 40 888 100 in 2000 to RON 430 247 981 in 2014; the profit increased from RON 1 335 795 in 2000 to RON 33 972 086 in 2014 (Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5). As for the comparisons between the obtained results, at the level of studied area and the results obtained in a similar study carried out at the Bihor County, one can observe the existence of similarities and differences at the same time (Herman et al., 2017).

The time analysis of the share of tourism in the analyzed indicators reveals the existence of some time fluctuations for each indicator. In 2000, the situation was: the number of companies (19% of services, 16% of the total); number of employees (69% of services, 59% of total); the fiscal value (39% of services, 33% of total); profit (58% of services, 43% of total) (Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5). In 2014, the situation was: the number of companies (16% of services, 13% of the total); number of employees (56% of services, 44% of total); the fiscal value (32% of services, 17% of total); profit (36% of services, 17% of total) (figures 2, 3, 4 and 5).

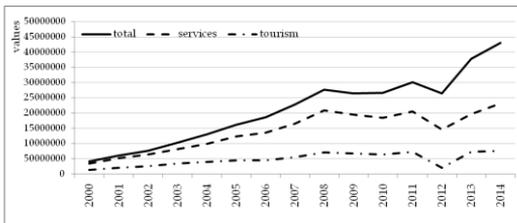
The analyzes of the comparative evolutions of the above-mentioned indicators, by sectors of activity, showed growth tendencies in all three sectors of activity during the analyzed period, thus, between 2000 and 2014, the number of primary sector companies increased by 525%, followed by those in the secondary sector (509%) and tertiary (340%), the number of employees in the primary sector increased by 589.4%, followed by those in the secondary sector (163.8%) and tertiary (128.5%), the fiscal value in the primary sector increased by 4301.9%, followed by those in the secondary sector (2056.5%) and tertiary (678.2%), the profit in the primary sector increased by 83906.9%, followed by the ones in the secondary sector (2763.4%) and tertiary (1614.4%) (figures 6, 7, 8 and 9).



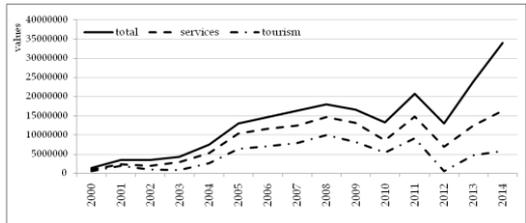
**Figure 2.** Touristic system Băile Felix – Băile 1 Mai correlation between the evolutions of number of companies in tourism, services and total number of firms between the years 2000-2014



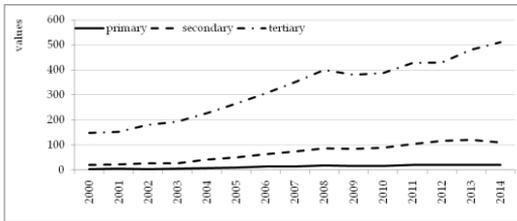
**Figure 3.** Correlation between the evolutions of the number of employees in tourism, services and the total number of employees between the years 2000-2014



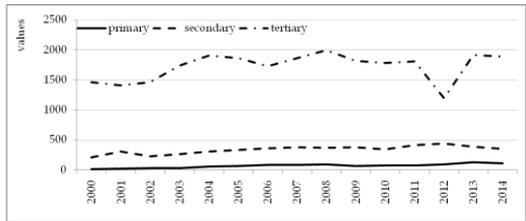
**Figure 4.** Correlation between the evolutions of turnover in tourism, services and the total turnover between the years 2000-2014



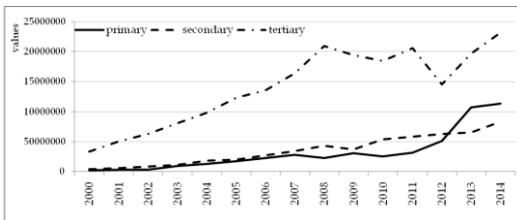
**Figure 5.** Correlation between the evolutions of profit in tourism, services and the total profit between the years 2000-2014



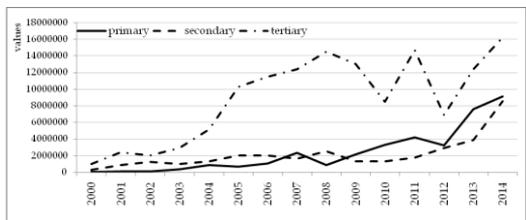
**Figure 6.** Correlation between the evolutions of the number of companies in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors between the years 2000-2014



**Figure 7.** Correlation between the evolutions of the number of employees in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors between the years 2000-2014



**Figure 8.** Correlation between the evolutions of the turnover in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors between the years 2000-2014



**Figure 9.** Correlation between the evolutions of profit in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors between the years 2000-2014

Nevertheless, from the analysis of the evolution of the weight of the number of companies, the number of employees, the fiscal value and the profits per sectors of activity, between 2000 and 2014, is remarkable the predominance of the share of those in the tertiary sector, followed by the secondary and the primary sector. For instance, in 2014, the activity by business sectors of the indicators analyzed was: the number of companies (primary sector 3%, secondary 18%, tertiary 79%); number of employees (primary sector 5%, secondary 15%, tertiary 80%); the fiscal value (primary sector 26%, secondary 20%, tertiary 54%); profit (primary sector 27%, secondary 25%, tertiary 48%) (figures 6, 7, 8 and 9).

## CONCLUSIONS

The mutations happening on a social, economic and mental level of our society, characterized by a change of the existential values of people which led to the identification of new niches when it comes to local development. One of these niches, implying its structure and functionality, is tourism in general, curative and recreational ones especially. From a historic point of view, it has its roots even from previous centuries, today, we can notice somewhat of a refreshment of this activity, acknowledging its positive effects on the human body that is being affected by the exhausting rhythm of today's global society. In this context, we can highlight that the analysis and comparative correlations between the number of companies, employees, fiscal value and profit recorded, in time, on a local level, constitutes a prime indicator when it comes to the purpose of tourism in the development of the local economy specific to the touristic system Băile Felix – Băile 1 Mai.

To support this affirmation we have the conclusions of the study presented:

- the increasing number of companies, employees, fiscal value and profit, in the tourist system Băile Felix – Băile 1 Mai, between 2000 – 2014, has been ascending, (with some oscillations in the years 2010, 2012);

- from the study of number of companies, employees, fiscal value and profit in the touristic area we notice the existence of some oscillations in time for each indicator and the prevalence of the activities specific to tourism;

- the analysis of the comparative evolutions of the previous indicators, on activity sectors, have shown tendencies of increasement in all 3 activity sectors, in the time interval 2000-2014 ;

- the analysis of the evolution of the number of companies, employees, fiscal value and profit on activity sectors, between the years 2000-2014, highlight the dominance of the tertiary sector, followed by the secondary and primary ones.

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