INTRODUCTION

The planning and construction of many infrastructure development projects have encountered many unanticipated difficulties and risks in recent times. Special socio-economic and environmental considerations must now be accounted for. Public participation has increasingly become a key element in development projects creating new ground rules and expectations for management and risk policy decisions (Gregory, 2000). The proposition that greater levels of public participation could improve decisions has also attracted considerable support from decision-making bodies (Mumpower, 2001). Therefore, extensive evaluation of public participation techniques is necessary and needs to be taken into account since a growing amount of effort and resources are being devoted to such participation activities (TRB, 1999).

Evaluation of public involvement activities is broadly recognized and practised in developed countries in several fields such as risk management decisions (McComas and Scherer, 1998), environmental decisions (Beierle, 1998), transportation development (TRB, 1999),